The Magazine for Advanced Comic Book Collectors!

COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE

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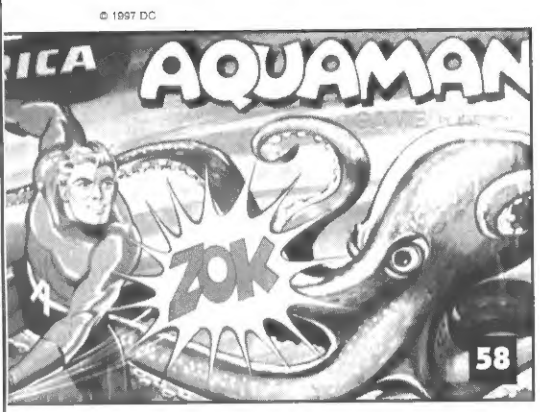

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ON THE COVER:
A closeup of Murphy Anderson's painting of Justice League of America #2, originally published December 1960/ January 1961.

JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA © 1997 DC

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Issue Number #45, March 1997

GLOSSY STACK OF 28s!

I was only eleven when it happened, but I remember the event as though it were yesterday. I was reading a newly purchased copy of DC's *Tales Of The Unexpected* #47 in early 1960. I was contemplating the first story "The Man Who Stole The Solar System" when I turned to the house ad for *Brave & Bold* #28. I stared at the page blankly, not believing my eyes... then found my feet and ran from the room shouting for my younger brother. "Lane, come 'ere quick... they've put... them all... in the same comic...Laaaaa-aane!" I could hardly contain myself. I was in 11-year-old's heaven. *Flash* had been out for a while and the Green Lantern tryouts in *Showcase* had been incredible. And there they both were, along with old favorites Wonder Woman, Aquaman, and J'onn J'onzz. The five of them on one cover fighting that alien star creature had me absolutely hypnotized! I didn't care that in the ad the green Martian Manhunter was incorrectly colored yellow with a purple costume! I didn't question the fact that Green Lantern had been chosen for this new book, yet didn't have his own magazine. It didn't even bother me that Superman and Batman were given top billing in the ad but weren't on the cover. All I cared about was buying that wonderful issue!

And so my quest began. First, I needed to find four empty pop bottles (3¢ deposit each). Four would be enough to buy that beauty of a comic... and still have enough left over for a pair of penny jawbreakers!

The bottles located, I carefully placed them in my bicycle basket, and high-tailed it down to the Day & Night Market like someone possessed! The proprietor, Mr. Todaro, knew me by my first name because I was both a regular customer and a familiar pest. He wanted my comic business but hated the way I searched every comic pile on his rack for the best copy. I nervously said "hello" and proceeded immediately to the magazine area. My eyes found *Challengers of the Unknown* #12...then *Flash* #111...then... there it was...a large, beautiful, and glossy stack of 28s, just waiting for me to flip through, in search of the best copy!

Avoiding the top and bottom copies with their telltale bundling wire dents, I gingerly plucked a semi-perfect issue from the center of the stack, handed Mr. T four bottles, got my change in Jawbreakers, carefully placed my prize flat in the bike basket so I could hold it against the wind as I peddled, and excitedly rolled home.

When I got there, my brother was waiting for me in the front yard! He even ran up the street to meet me... or rather meet IT! I slammed the kickstand with my foot, and we ran inside... laid on the floor in the living room, and read "Starro The Conqueror", panel by delicious panel. When we finished, we started all over again, this time adding a running commentary about what we liked and didn't like. We weren't too keen on the art or the Edward "Kookie" Burns-like character Snapper Carr. We loved any scene with more than one hero. We loved the fact that the plot and villain were sci fi. In spite of the few things we didn't like, we thought the concept of a hero team was just about the best idea DC had ever come up with. We were fans, we were hooked... and we wanted more... a lot more!

You see my brother and I (like most young readers in the '50s and early '60s) had no idea there had been a Justice Society or a DC title called *All Star Comics*. We thought this revolutionary, exciting, and "new" idea was ours...and it made such an impact on us that it completely and forever changed the way we thought about the universe of heroes. It meant that all the DC characters must live in the same universe...that they must have heard of each other...and most importantly, that they could have adventures together! This "new" team concept was a revelation with far reaching implications that truly boggled our preteen minds!

I know modern day readers sometimes have difficulty understanding why so many of us Silver-Agers keep harping on the JLA, and why those early issues meant so much to us. Maybe it's because we loved the comics and their characters when they were all by themselves...that "together in one magazine" that intensity of feeling was multiplied to almost unbearable levels. Perhaps it was simply that it was such an incredible and innovative time in comic history and we were just swept along in the avalanche of new ideas and characters. But whatever the reasons, I still get that special feeling in my gut when I see *Brave & Bold* #28... and maybe a little misty-eyed too. That first JLA story harkens back to a time when our beloved comics meant everything to us... an important, reassuring, and joyful part of our lives...

Gary M. Carter, Editor

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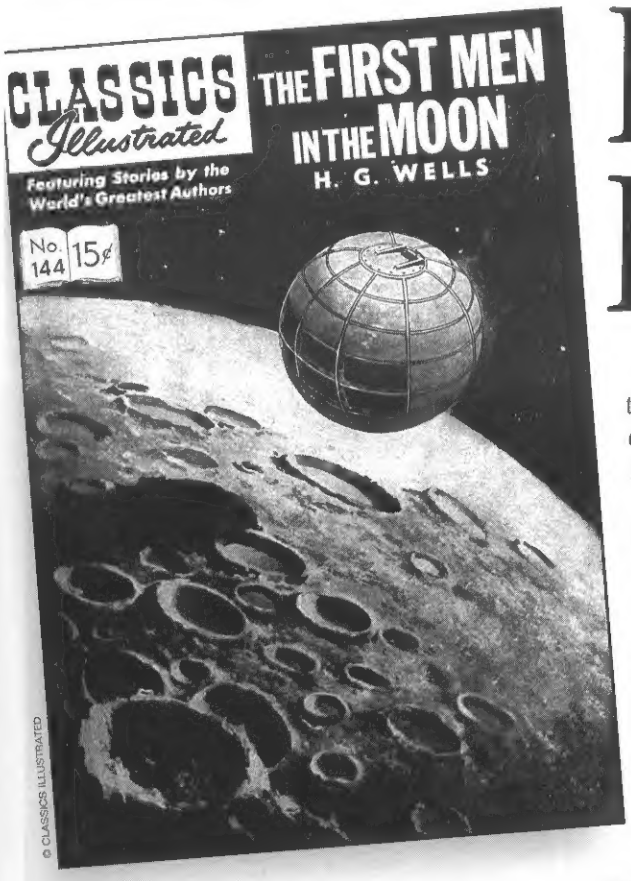
Lunar Landings!

By Pat S. Calhoun

After World War II science fiction enjoyed an unprecedented surge in popularity. This was, to some extent, due to the genre's having been "validated" as a forum for prediction by the technological advances during the war years... up to and including the atomic bomb. Even space travel was becoming a concept that could be treated in a more realistic manner. The idea of voyages to other planets became part of the vision of the future that was rushing closer to the present with each scientific discovery–it was the new frontier. And the stepping stone and maiden goal of space exploration would be the moon. In 1950, Hollywood made an almost documentary-style film called "Destination Moon." Writer Robert A. Heinlein, one of the superstars of modern science fiction, was part of the project and surely helped give the adventure its plausibly-detailed "you are there" feeling. The movie was enough of a sensation that two different publishers produced almost simultaneous adaptations in comic book form.


CLASSICS Illustrated
Featuring Stories by the World's Greatest Authors
No. 144 15¢
THE FIRST MEN IN THE MOON
H. G. WELLS
© CLASSICS ILLUSTRATED

Fawcett produced a book-length adaptation for their Movie Comic series in 1950, and that same year DC used the film as the cover feature for their first sci fi comic, *Strange Adventures* #1. The Fawcett book is a cover-through-cover treatment, from the movie-still-rocket front to the marvelous moon image on the back. The comic book story unfolds with a simplicity that deepens upon rereading. A rocket engineer, a general, an industrial backer, and an "average Joe" radio man comprise the crew of the first manned trip into space. The ship runs on an atomic motor of the engineer's devising. The take-off goes smoothly and much is made of the astronauts' weightless condition–handled humorously as Joe "digests" the concept while eating lunch.

The first complication arises when the radar antenna won't open, and Joe announces that he greased it before they left. The grease has frozen; so they have to go outside to clean it off. The engineer gets down on his knees so that his magnetic shoes come free of the hull, and he starts to drift off. The industrialist takes a spare oxygen tank and uses it as a mini-jet to shoot out and effect a rescue. Then they land on the moon where they exhibit great feats of lifting and leaping in the 1/6 gravity. Despite the absence of life or atmosphere or any cosmic surprises the lunar landing is still and rightfully treated as an enterprise of imaginative power and awesome wonder. And the explorers are heroes, advancing the human condition on a historic journey. The calm dignity of the straightforward story captures the spirit that in nineteen years would make a reality of an age-old dream.

The Fawcett art is only adequate, but this is an immensely satisfying comic, one that really marks the mood of the era.

In 1951 Avon issued Rocket to the Moon, an adaptation of the 1930s space opera, Maza of the Moon, by the prolific pulpster Otis Adelbert Kline. The accent here is on color and action–in the Burroughs tradition–with lavish battle scenes and a luscious princess in peril. The art is gloriously rendered by Joe Orlando in a 25-page symphony of high fantasy style. Unfortunately, my cut-rate copy, an unauthorized 1964 *Super Comics* reprint, came with a cover far less compelling than the Orlando original, but the novel inside is complete, and the production values are clean.

The story takes place in 1964 (concurrently with the pirate *Super Comics* printing!) as the space race starts quickly after the first unmanned rocket to the moon is interpreted by the lunar people as a hostile act. They retaliate by blowing away parts of Paris and London with rocket bombs. Radio contact is established with the Lunites, who–incredibly–are human, with mysterious ties to the ancient Chinese. When Ted Dustin,

This Classics Illustrated version (1958) of H. G. Wells seminal 1901 science fiction novel "The First Men in the Moon" is another reason Wells is called one of the fathers of science fiction.

scientist and industrialist and launcher of that first moon missile, hears of the attack, he builds a space ship to carry him on a reconnaissance mission to the lunar satellite. Ted suspects that the destruction caused by his first moon rocket has given the Lunites an excuse to invade Earth–perhaps working in league with China on a plot to conquer the world. Ted uses an "atomotor" to power his rocket (coming from a 1930s pulp story this shows how SF was preparing the public for the new technologies), which successfully lands him inside a crater on the moon's surface.

He ventures out into a jungle world and promptly gets trapped by the tentacles of a carnivorous plant but is freed when Princess Maza shows up and blasts the voracious vegetable with a ray gun. The princess is head of the lunar opposition party that would rather have peace than war. Maza is captured, Ted rescues her, then she gets abducted again as the warmongers do battle against those who would thwart the invasion. But just as Maza'a army is about to fall prey to death rays from the enemy rocket globes–a mighty interplanetary battleship arrives from Earth. Protected by a force-field the Earthlings wreak havoc on the attacking Lunites in an impressively drawn sequence that joyously conveys the essence of space opera. But then the Lunites bathe the battleship in their giant freeze ray and paralyze the Earthlings. Now the only hope is that Ted Dustin can get to the cold ray projector and destroy it before his people perish....

Kline's story, plotted with all the finely-tuned formulas of pulp fiction, leaves it to the hero to save the day, and wrapped up along with that is some solid faith that technological progress will help us meet the challenges of tomorrow. But the sci-fi tradition blends that general faith in science with darker currents that question our ability to control the powers we acquire in our probings of nature. H.G. Wells, one of the fathers of science fiction, exhibited this mixed viewpoint in his works. The First Men in the Moon, first published in 1901, has in it both the fascination with and enthusiasm for new ideas and discoveries, as well as doubts that our ethical progress can keep pace with technical advancements.

In 1958, as the space race was heating up, Gilberton adapted Wells' novel as #144 in their *Classics Illustrated* series. The four-color version of The First Men in the Moon was drawn by the talented team of Al Williamson, Angelo Torres, and George Woodbridge. The Gilberton edition hit the stands in that early Silver Age period where science fiction surpassed superheros in popularity, eleven years before the actual moon landing.

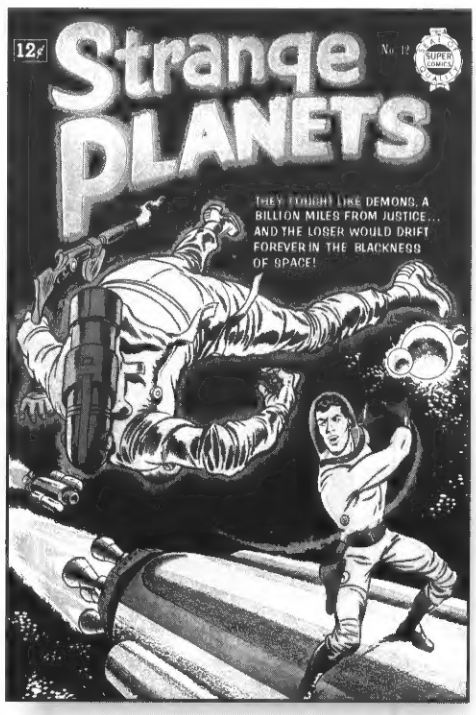
The story starts with a scientist's invention of an anti-gravity substance. By coating this substance onto movable blinds in a reinforced sphere, a ship is constructed that can be propelled and turned by opening and closing the banks of blinds. Caught up in the rush of discovery–Professor Cavor and his neighbor, Bedford, the story's narrator, stock the sphere with provisions, close all the blinds, and plunge into space.

Fawcett published numerous movie adaptations in the early '50s, with two regular series–Motion Picture Comics and Fawcett Movie Comics. The SF classic, Destination Moon (1950), was part of the latter series and is the most distinguished issue of either run.

The traveling duo experience weightlessness, and then, opening blinds that face the moon, allow themselves to be drawn to a lunar landing. One of the most amazing and beautiful scenes of the comic occurs during the lunar dawn as the barren world is quickly covered by a blanket of plant life that grows out anew every morning. Alien flora was always a specialty of Mr. Williamson's. The rich vegetation convinces Cavor and Bedford to dare the outside air, and they find that they can breathe it.

They go exploring, taking advantage of the reduced gravity and covering ground in thirty-yard leaps. The Earthmen get lost, and wandering in search of the sphere they glimpse the lunar natives whom Bedford describes as ant-men. The humans get hungry and eat moon-mushrooms that drug them into unconsciousness, which allows their capture by the moon-men. They awake, chained, and four lunar guards escort them into the moon city, deep underground and lit by canals of phosphorescent liquid. With their otherworldly strength (three decades before Superman) they snap their chains, overwhelm their captors, and escape to the surface. There–examining the chain remnants and seeing that they are made of gold, Bedford comments that they could be rich, but Cavor counters "If our secret got out, governments and men would struggle to get here. They would fight against one another and against these moon people. This planet would soon be strewn with dead."

The "unauthorized" IW/Super Comics sometimes reprinted generic material under a superb cover... and sometimes reprinted an outstanding comic under a generic cover! Strange Planets (1964/Super) is an example of the latter case, reprinting the interior of Rocket to the Moon (Avon, 1951).


12¢
Strange PLANETS
No. 12
THEY FOUGHT LIKE DEMONS, A BILLION MILES FROM JUSTICE... AND THE LOSER WOULD DRIFT FOREVER IN THE BLACKNESS OF SPACE!

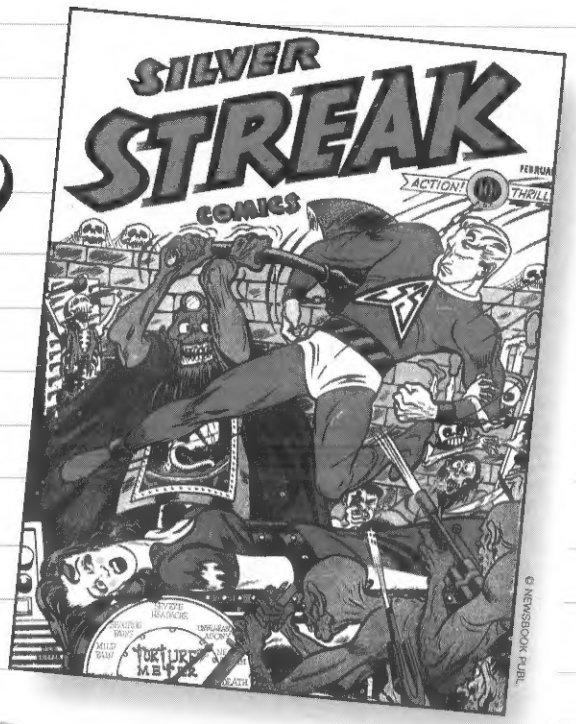
They separate to continue hunting for their ship. Bedford finds it and goes back to the rendezvous where he finds a note left by Cavor who has been seized by another group of ant-men. As the chill of lunar night starts to fall, Bedford runs back to the sphere and closes the blinds. Bedford gets back to Earth, loses the sphere, and soon is called to Holland where a Dutch scientist is receiving radio messages from the moon in English! They are from Cavor, and his likely fate in the lunar people's hands again gives Wells opportunity to brood on human shortcomings. This is fiction bursting with ideas and speculating on human meaning as well as scientific concepts. Classics, with their fifteen-cent price tag, kept the 52-page format of the postwar years after everyone else had slimmed down to 36 pages–affording this story 45 pages to develop its complex themes.

These three science fiction comics from the 1950s did their bit to help achieve that "giant step" made by Apollo 11, its crew, and all of us, on July 20, 1969. ■

Is it rare... or is it real?

Here's more on the obscure, the uncommon and the non-existent

By Michelle Nolan



Dick Briefer did the cover of the Silver Streak no-number issue (cover dated February, probably 1945 or 1946). The cover is possibly a parody of the Schomburg style. Note the "Torture Meter" with six (count 'em six) ridiculous settings!

So much feedback came in and so many collectors commented on my column of one year ago on non-existent comics that I thought a followup would be in order. This time, though, we'll emphasize how "comic book data detectives" work, since I received several requests for more on that topic.

In that column last year (*CBM* #33), I listed three groups of comic books that I strongly felt definitely or probably non-existent. Well, yours truly was a bit humbled by the responses of several friendly collectors who had, located a few supposedly "phantom funny books" and were kind enough to let me know–without needling me about my errors!

However, the vast majority of the comic books in those lists have, indeed, turned out to be either certainly non-existent or probably so, especially after another year of intense research has failed to turn up most of them. And for those reading about this topic for the first time–did you know that more than 150 Golden Age comics listed in the *Overstreet Price Guide* do not exist? The lists accompanying this column provide the details on two types of "phantom funnies"–one is a list of comics I have no reason to believe exist and the other is a list of comics that possibly or even probably don't exist.

My data-collecting friend, Southern California indexer Dan Stevenson, and I spent a lot of time during past year compiling these lists, with the help of many friends around the nation, especially fellow members of APA-I (the Amateur Press Alliance for Indexers). I'll truly be shocked if more than one or two comics show up from these two lists. But I would truly love to hear from anyone who has a copy of any issue listed! I'll be happy to credit anyone submitting verified data and I will try not to wait a year.

The entire subject of rarity and scarcity (not the same thing) in comics has long been clouded by a variety of conflicting opinions, and it would certainly be impossible to cover such a complex topic in one column. It adds a lot of spice to the hobby, but it's also frustrating to see folks misusing the terms or providing a bundle of misinformation. And, of course, notwithstanding monumental accomplishments such as Ernie *Gerber's Photo Journal Guide* or Bob *Overstreet's Price Guide*, there can never be a totally accurate "scarcity index." Educated guesses and polls are the best we can ever hope to have. But then, in my opinion, that just makes the hobby that much more fun!

In this column, I'm going to talk about two special cases of comic detection and how two challenging problems were solved, along with a few other examples of uncommon comic books. But first... here are comic books I listed a year ago as questionable, yet that definitely *do exist*:

From Gary Watson in Columbus, Ohio, comes confirmation of the existence of Fox's *All-Top* #4 (January/February 1947) and

THESE COMICS MAY NOT EXIST

All-Top #6 (Fox, 1947). The issue illustrated in the Photo Journal is a late 1950's reprint. There were two #7's, so #6 may have been skipped.

Beanie the Meanie #2 (Fago, 1959).

Big Chief Wahoo #7 (Eastern, 1940s).

Billy the Kid Adventure Magazine #30 (Toby, 1955).

Blondie, Dagwood and Daisy one-shot (supposedly 100 pages from Harvey in 1953). This could be a foreign edition.

Blue Circle #6 (Enwil, 1945). Cover exists slapped on early 1950's comics.

Blue Beetle #43 (Fox, 1946).

Captain Battle #4 (Magazine Press, 1943).

Challenger #1 (Interfaith, 1946).

Cosmo Cat #6, #9 (Fox, 1947). These seem likely to exist.

Curley Kayo #3, #4 (United, 1940s). #1-2, 5-8 exist, but where are they?

Diary Confessions #13 (Stanmor, 1956).

Dynamic Comics #25 (Chesler, 1948).

Flash Gordon #5 (Harvey, 1950).

Foreign Intrigues #13 (Charlton, 1956).

Fritzi Ritz #2 (United, 1948).

Kid Cowboy #12 (St. John, 1954-55).

Lil Genius #5 (Charlton 1954-55).

Love Tales #59 (Atlas, 1952 or 1954).

Love Trails #2 (Atlas, 1950).

Madhouse #4 (Ajax, 1957). The first series #4 does exist.

New Romances #21 (Standard, 1954).

Never Again #2 (Charlton, 1955-56).

Romeo Tubbs #1 (Fox, 1950).

They Ring the Bell one-shot (Fox, 1946). A giveaway?

Western Desperado Comics #8 (Fawcett, 1940).

Wild Boy of the Congo #10 (St. John, 1955). An earlier Ziff-Davis #10 exists.

MYTHICAL COMICS

I have absolutely no reason to believe any of these Golden Age comics (through the 1950s)–all listed in the Overstreet Price Guide–really do exist as United States newsstand editions. Can anyone prove me wrong? If I don't hear from anyone, these will be submitted for deletion.

Alice #2 (Ziff-Davis) This issue exists only as #11 on the cover & #2 in the indicia.

Animal Crackers #2–9 (Fox).

Atom-Age Combat #1 (Fago). This exists as a 1958 St. John title; as with other comics, Fago took over with #2.

Badge of Justice #23 and **#1** (Charlton).

Barney Baxter #4 and **#5** (Dell).

Beanie the Meanie #1 (Fago or St. John). This may exist, but I can't find one anywhere.

Big Chief Waho #8–23 (Eastern). No run of this length could escape collectors.

Blazing West #21 and **#22** (ACG). These are really Hooded Horseman issues from the 1952-53 series.

Champ Comics #26–29 (Harvey).

Crime and Justice #22 (Charlton).

Dandee one-shot (Four Star).

Dark Mysteries #25 (Story).

Dime Comics #1 and **#5** (1951).

Exciting Romances #13 and **#14** (Fawcett).

Family Funnies #1 (Harvey).

Flyboy #3 and **#4** (Ziff-Davis).

Foodini #5 (Continental).

Funny Picture Stories #8 and **#9** (Comics Magazine Co.)

#5 (February/March 1947), Dell's *Henry* #65 (April/June 1961), United Feature's *Curley Kayo* #5 & 6 (no date, 1940s), Stanmor's *Silver Kid* #5 (July 1955) and Fox's *Cosmo Cat* #7 (July 1947) and #10 (October 1947). He also says he has *Cosmo Cat* #8 but doesn't list a date; I assume it's August, 1947. Watson is just the kind of collector I like to hear from–someone with large piles of cheap but obscure old comics. Thanks, Gary!

From longtime collector and dealer Bart Bush of Norman, Oklahoma, comes a copy of a 1968 ad clearly listing Fox's *Blue Beetle* #43 from 1946 for sale. We're still hunting for confirmation of the existence of this issue, but it's contributions like this that keep us going. Neither index pioneer Howard Keltner, who has been hunting data for more than four decades, (nor I) believe this issue exists. Either that, or perhaps all or some copies that are not actually issue #43 have "43" on the cover and/or "43" in the indicia. Thanks, Bart!

And from another veteran collector, Bob Barrett of Long Beach, California, comes a real gem of a discovery–the ultra-rare St. John digest comic *Teen-Age Diary Secrets* #7 from November 1949! Thanks, Bob! Collectors who have the other digest issue (#9, September 1950), have said that house ads in

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Bang-Up Comics #2 (Mar 1942) is one of the most obscure of all Golden Age Comics.
The scarce Fight Comics #16 (Dec 1941) is the first of the only three issues with two patriotic superheros in the same Fiction House comic.

other late 1949 St. John romance comics apparently indicate that #9 is a reprint of #7. At any rate, Barrett is the first fellow I've ever heard from who has a copy of #7! I recall that when I tried to buy an inexpensive copy of #9 a couple of years ago from longtime retailer David Alexander, he told me he had received more than two dozen orders for it! If you think *Suspense* #3 is hot and hard to find, you ought to try to buy a copy of *Teen-Age Diary Secrets* #7 or #9!

This provides a natural segue to this column's primary topic–comic data detection! Our first example will be the torture we underwent trying to unlock the mysteries of *Teen-Age Diary Secrets* (sorry, I couldn't resist that pun!). This is a great example of why data detection can be so difficult, yet such a fulfilling challenge.

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St. John began *Teen-Age Diary Secrets* under the indicia title of *Blue Ribbon Comics*. *Blue Ribbon* #1 and #3 are Heckle and Jeckle and #6 is Dinky Duck (one of the cutest funny animal characters in history, by the way). *Blue Ribbon* #2 (April 1949) is entitled *Diary Secrets*. *Blue Ribbon* #4 (June 1949) has a new logo and is entitled *Teen-Age Diary Secrets*. *Blue Ribbon* #5 (August 1949) has a whole new logo for *Teen-Age Diary Secrets* (it's the one issue of the three not pictured in the *Photo Journal* but is unveiled at last in this issue of *CBM*!)

Now it really gets weird. St. John next published *Teen-Age Diary Secrets* #4 (September 1949), a part-comic, part-magazine similar to *Calling All Girls*. Issue #4 is not numbered

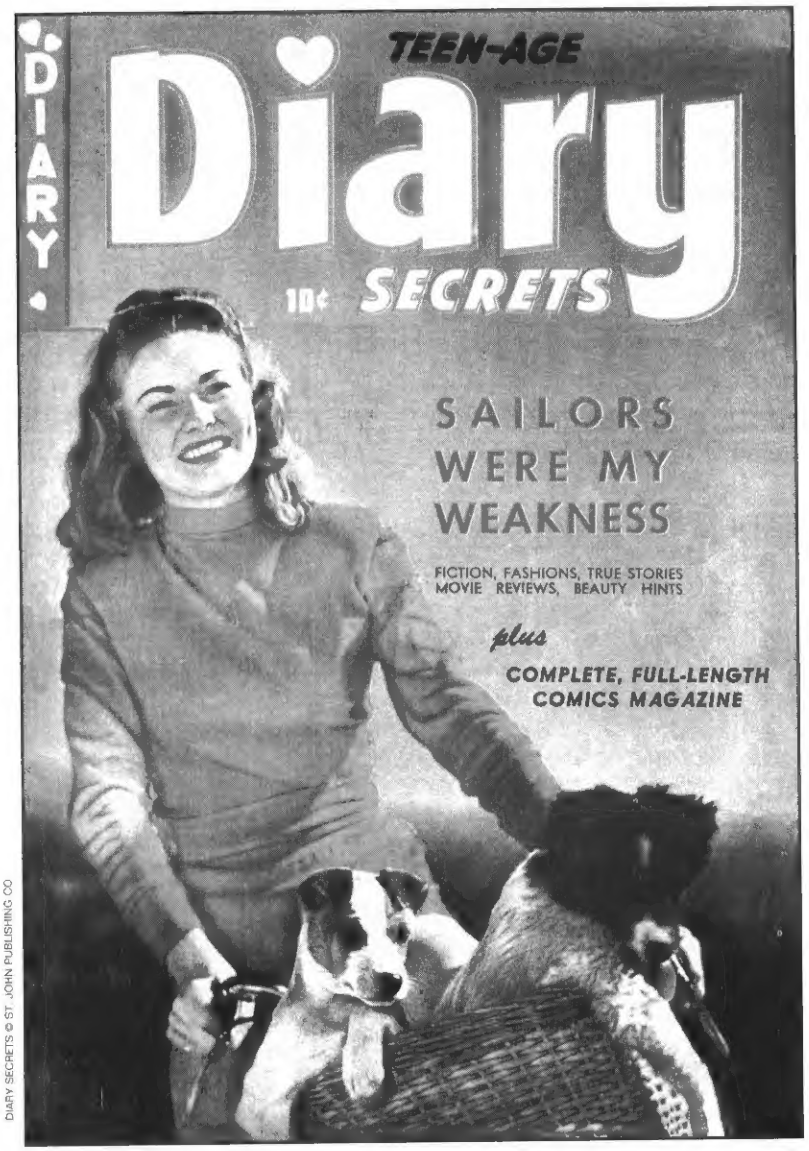
Hand of Fate #26 (ACG.)
Hawk #5, #6, #7 (Ziff-Davis or St. John). These are confused with a couple of issues of Approved Comics reprints, which contain two numbers in their indicias.
Hooded Horseman #23 through **#27** (ACG, second series, supposedly 1956).
Iron Vic #2 and **#3** (St. John). Comics Revue #3 is an Iron Vic issue.
Jackie Gleason #1 and **#2** (St. John, 1948). The 1955 issues, of course, do exist.
Jim Bowie #15 (Charlton).
Jolly one-shot (Four Star).
Korner Kid Komics one-shot (Four Star).
Lil Genius #1–4 (Charlton).
Lil Ghost #1 (Fago). #1 exists from St. John.
Little Giant Detective Funnies #2 and **#3** (Centaur).
Love Stories #6–12 (Star or Fox). These are confused with Top Love Stories.
Manhunt #12 (Magazine Enterprises).
Men in Action #7–9 (Ajax). The Atlas issues of this title do exist.
Merry Comics one-shot (Four Star). There is a #1 from Carlton (not Charlton).
Merry-Go-Round #21 (?)
Nutty Comics #2 and **#3** (Harvey).
Peter Rabbitt #1 (Fago).
Range Busters #1–7 (Fox).
Romantic Love #4 (Quality). This does exist as an Avon comic.
Search for Love #3 (ACG).
Sensational Police Cases #1 (Avon).
Silver Streak #22 and **#24** (Lev Gleason).
Sunday Funnies #1 (Harvey).
Super Duper #5, 8, 11 (Harvey).
Super Western Comics #2–4 (Youthful). This is confused with Superior's Super Western Funnies #3 and #4.
Sweetie Pie #3–14 (Ajax or Pines).
3-D Dell #2 (Dell). There were two 3-D issues, not three.
Tommy of the Big Top #10 (Standard).
Top Flight one-shot (Four Star). There is a Top Flight #1 from St. John.
Trapped #5 (Ace).
Varsity #1 (Parents Magazine). This apparently exists only as a magazine, possibly with some comics.
White Rider and Super Horse #1–3 (Star).
Witty Comics #3–7 (Rubin).
X-Mas Comics #3–6 (Fawcett, first series through 1947). The series apparently exists as #1, 2 and 7, then a later #4 through #7.

THE HOWARD KELTNER PROJECT

Howard Keltner, one of fandom's pioneers and most knowledgeable indexers, is in the final stages of a project that indexes every Golden Age comic with superheros. He needs data on the following 25 issues, all of which are scarce and at least a couple of which may not exist. Please take the time to write or call him and help him finish a 40-year plus project! Write to Howard Keltner, 1602 Cherry St., Gainesville, TX 76241 or call (817) 665-2066.

All-New Comics #15 (Harvey).
All-Top Comics #3, 6 (Fox). Be sure the #6 is not a late 1950's reprint.
Captain Battle #4 (Magazine Press).
Captain Midnight #65, 67 (Fawcett).
Dagar, Desert Hawk #21, 23 (Fox).
Jo Jo #2 (Fox, funny animals).
Jo Jo Congo King #22, 23, 29 (Fox).
Punch #23 (Chesler/Superior).
Sparkling Stars #1, 3, 5, 22, 25, 27, 29, 32 (Holyoke).
Super Mystery V5#6, V6#1 (Ace).
Supersnipe V4#8 (Street & Smith).
Terrific #4 (Continental).

but is also dated September 1949 with "Fashions Issue" on the cover–but there is no indicia anywhere in the comic and the only fashions are in the two Matt Baker stories (he always drew



DIARY SECRETS © ST. JOHN PUBLISHING CO

such gorgeous and accurate fashions, and that is why I collect Baker. They are real social history). Issue #5 is all comics, as are all the remaining issues, so #4 was an anomaly. Issue #5 is also pictured here, if only to show the raciness of some of the titles (can you imagine the reaction of a teen or pre-teen girl's parents in 1949 when she brought home a comic book with a cover feature entitled "I Gave Boys the Green Light"!)

Neither #4 or #5 (technically a no-number issue) is pictured in the *Photo Journal*, so now you have shots of all three issues not in the *Photo Journal*!

Next came #6 (October 1949), followed by the ultra-rare digest #7 (November 1949), a regular-sized #8 (February 1950) and a long break before the digest reprint #9 (September 1950). (#6 and #8 are in the *Photo Journal*). The "Love Glut" of 1950 romance titles shook up St. John along with so many other publishers, and only *Teen-Age Romances*, among that company's romance titles, was published without interruption in 1950.

That was the end of *Teen-Age Diary Secrets*–until 1952, when it emerged again as *Diary Secrets* #10 (February 1952), which was actually a first issue! Now you can see how difficult some of this stuff has been for indexers. Not to mention the fact that the December, 1954, issues of both *Teen-Age Diary Secrets* (actually #26) and *Teen-Age Romances* (actually #40) are no-number issues. Neither had been published since three months earlier in September, and apparently there was some indicia confusion. However, they finished out 1955–their last year of publication–with normally dated issues, beginning with *Teen-Age Diary Secrets* #27 and *Teen-Age Romances* #41, both dated January 1955). The reason it was especially important to solve these oddities was for the benefit of the many collectors of Matt Baker art and covers.

Had enough romance? Let's shoot on over to a Western comics mystery! Until recently, collectors had wondered why the early 1950's collectible company Youthful had begun its *Buffalo Bill* title with #2 (October 1950). The reason is simple–*Buffalo Bill* #1 was entitled *Super Western Comics* (August 1950), with a huge Buffalo Bill logo. But hold on, podner–what's this listing in the *Price Guide* for *Super Western Comics* #2-4? If the title changed to *Buffalo Bill* with #2, how can *Super Western Comics* also have a #2?

The answer is that it doesn't. Somewhere along the line, the *Super Funnies* title from the Canadian publisher Superior, which became *Super Western Funnies* with #3 and #4 in 1954, became confused with the first issue of the Youthful title, even though *Super Western Funnies* is correctly listed in the *Price Guide*. Stevenson and I only recently discovered this error. (By the way, *Super Funnies* started out as a 3-D funny animal comic, shifted to a *MAD* knockoff with #2, and turned into a western featuring the Phantom Ranger with #3 and #4!)

Now, aren't you glad you never became a comic data detective?

But, seriously folks, this stuff can be a lot of fun even with all the frustration of checking out misleading titles and collectors' submissions! I'm sure, though, you can see just how confusing it all can be.

Now let's shift on over for a little on the topic of obscurity. I have three great examples for you–the no number *Silver Streak* issue, the three issues of *Bang-Up Comics*, and the only true patriotic heroes from Fiction House! In my book, fandom doesn't realize how obscure these really are. I'm not sure how rare they are–though they are undeniably scarce–but they sure are obscure.

The no-number *Silver Streak*, which reprints stories from *Silver Streak* #4-7, was dated February on the cover, apparently sometime between 1944 and 1946, and published by

Newsbook Publishing Corporation in New York (Newsbook also published *Silver Streak* #23 and the one-shot *Dime Comics*, both of which also featured Silver Streak, albeit in either new or leftover material). The no-number *Silver Streak* has a World War II ad, so it's certainly no later than February 1946 and may well be a year or two earlier (it's 60 pages).

The no-number *Silver Streak* (not pictured in the *Photo Journal*, but unveiled here) is a true gem, if only for what apparently is a great parody cover by Dick Briefer (who was doing Frankenstein as a humor strip for Crestwood). Briefer, in what may be a sendup of the type of covers created by Alex Schomburg for Nedor, Timely, Harvey and Continental, has Silver Streak coming to the rescue of a screaming woman menaced by monsters. They have her bound to a "Torture Meter" with labels ranging from worry, shooting pains and severe headache to unbearable agony, near death and death. There haven't been any inventions like this since Commando Cody wore the unforgettable rocket suit in the Republic serials with the directions fast, slow, up and down on his chest! You've got to admit that comics don't come any crazier than this *Silver Streak* no-number issue. It's the perfect companion to the somber seriousness of Schomburg's classic torture cover for *Suspense* #3, and I'll bet it's at least as scarce if not more so.

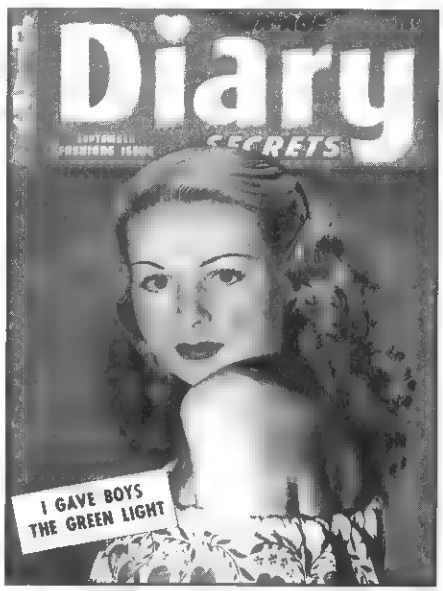
Among the most obscure of all Golden Age series is the three-issue run of *Bang-Up Comics* (love that title!), the only comic ever to come from Progressive Publishers in Chicago. They were dated December 1941, March 1942 and June 1942. This title featured one of the earliest super heroines, the fabulously named Lady Fairplay. (I always figured she and Mr. Terrific from *Sensation Comics* would have been quite an item.) Issue #2, which had to have been produced before the attack on Pearl Harbor, has a clever anti-war story with the tiny character Buzz Balmer (a sort of non-costumed Doll Man) humiliating both Hitler and Mussolini.

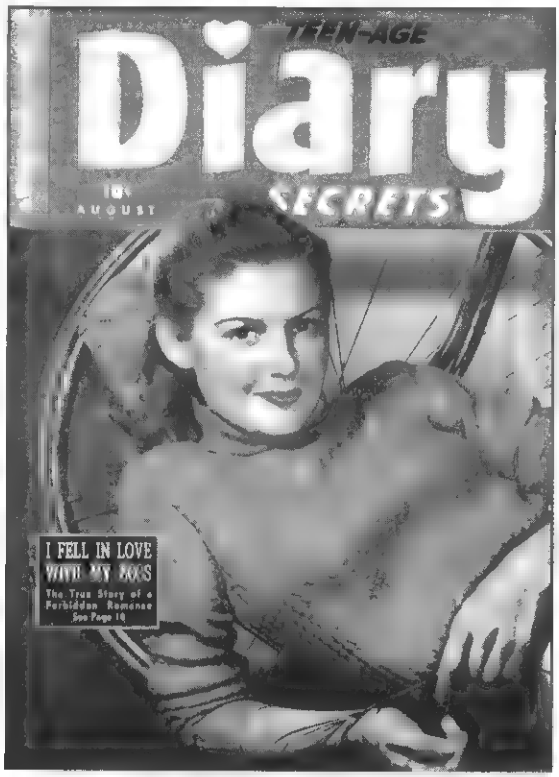
Two of the most obscure yet colorful and original Golden Age superheros were among the few members of that genre produced by Fiction House... Super American and Captain Fight. The two patriotic heroes appeared in only four issues– *Super American* in #15 (October 1941) through #18 (April 1942) and Captain Fight in #16 (December 1941) through #19 (June 1942). They both appeared only in #16-18. Unless you consider a few of Fiction House's many science fiction, aviation and jungle heroes and heroines as costume heroes, *Fight* #16-18 were the only Fiction House comics with a pair of traditional super guys. They were original, too. Super American was brought from the year 2350 to fight the scourges of democracy; Captain Fight was a high school coach who plays the role of a super athletic hero. I can't think of many characters with origins like that. I can assure you that all five of those Fiction House issues are uncommon–just try to find them! These are two of the least-seen of all Golden Age heroes.

The *Photo Journal* does not picture the no-number *Silver Streak* issue and gives it an 8 scarcity rating; it pictures the three issues of Bang-Up and calls them all 7s. I agree with all of that. However, *Fight* #15 is given a 6, with the other four issues 5s or 4s. That's being too liberal, in my opinion; they all deserve at least a 6.

How many copies of *Fight* #15-19 have you seen? I'll bet many of you have never seen them in person! I was lucky enough to find them years ago from the same source, but I spent many years looking for a second copy of #16 for a friend.

Until next time, happy hunting! ■





Blue Ribbon #5 (Aug 1949) featuring Teen-Age Diary Secrets and the real #3 of the series; Teen-Age Diary Secrets #4 (Sep 1949, the real fourth issue); Teen-Age Diary Secrets no-number (also Sep 1949), the real #5, with no indicia. These are the three issues not shown in the Photo Journal but of interest to Matt Baker collectors.

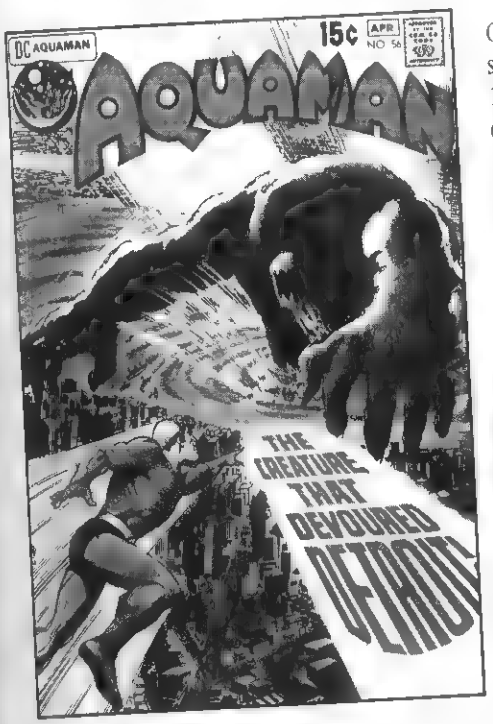
Michelle Nolan is a nationally recognized collector and researcher of comic books from the '40s through the '60s. She has one of the most extensive collections of 1950's comic books in the United States. In real life Michelle works as a freelance journalist

Steve Skeates

Comic book writer extraordinaire! **by Bob Brodsky**

In early 1968, DC's house ads screamed change. "A new kind of Superman" was coming and exciting innovations waited behind a big door closed off to outsiders until the appointed time. Meanwhile, covers by new talent Neal Adams began to appear in late '67, making even Mort Weisinger's inane Superman titles look good.

The sad behemoth that was DC in the late 1960s finally grew tired of eating Marvel's dust. 1968 brought a flurry of strange new titles such as *Beware the Creeper, The Hawk and The Dove,* and that famous two-issue wonder, *Brother Power, The Geek.* For better or worse, the '60s had finally arrived at National Periodical Publications.



Aquaman #56 (Mar/Apr 1971) is the last issue in the run and features cover art by Nick Cardy.

When Charlton Comics folded its superhero titles in late 1967, Dick Giordano, editor of the discontinued line, came to DC with five of his core crew and a mandate to renovate a few mediocre, low-selling books and create new characters for a series of new titles.

The influence of this group and the impact it would have on DC for decades to come is best illustrated by listing their names; Aparo, Boyette, Ditko, O'Neal… and Skeates.

Stephen Lewis Skeates, co-creator of *The Hawk and The Dove* and writer of the marvelous late '60's/early '70's *Aquaman* run, is also a real nice guy with a sharp memory and a love for comic books. Today, he lives in Alfred Station, New York, produces a series of independent comic books, works a regular day job on the town's road crew, and is far away from the "mainstream" comic book industry.

I recently caught up with Steve and talked about his old and new days.

"I started at Marvel in '65. I was Stan Lee's assistant editor prior to Roy Thomas, Denny O'Neal or Gary Friedrich. I only lasted a couple of weeks. I had no idea before I signed on that the main function of an assistant editor was proof-reading, and I was fairly terrible at that. I think Stan felt a bit guilty about firing me that quickly and let me write a number of Kid Colt and Two-Gun Kid Westerns."

After Marvel, Skeates went to Tower Comics, scripting *T.H.U.N.D.E.R Agents* and *U.N.D.E.R.S.E.A Agent* as well as co-creating and writing *Lightning* and *Raven*. "I did a lot with Mike Sekowsky. He started out as the main artist on Lightning and then Chic Stone took over from him. I also did some work with Steve Ditko and Ogden Whitney. Sam Schwartz was my editor. He came from Archie Comics and basically didn't understand the superheros at all. Wally Wood was more like the acting editor."

When Tower started to crumble in 1967, Skeates headed for Charlton, working initially on westerns and other Giordano titles including *The Many Ghosts of Dr. Graves*. "Since Charlton paid less than half of what everyone else paid, they gave you just about as much work as you wanted." While at Charlton, Skeates again worked with Ditko and began his collaboration with Jim Aparo.

Much about the revamp at DC remains a mystery. Old pros like Gardner Fox and Arnold Drake left the company just as the Charlton group arrived. Fox later made references to problems over the lack of adequate benefits within the company.

"It was really strange," Skeates recalls. "None of us knew at that time that the profit sharing and other stuff was going on. It was almost like we were scabs that were brought it in, but we didn't know it."

"What initially happened," Skeates says, "was the word came down to Dick at Charlton that the sales of all their superhero books were down and they were going to discon-

STOP THEM! DESTROY THEM!
WE GOTTA KEEP FIGHTING!
WHAT IS THIS??
IF IT'S TO BE A LOOSING BATTLE, THEN WE'LL GO DOWN FIGHTING!
THAT'S IT! THEY'RE DONE FOR!
THIS'LL TEACH THEM TO--
WHENEVER
WHA-?
T-TITANS! HOW DID YOU FIND US??
WE'LL TELL YOU LATER
RIGHT NOW WE'VE GOT SOME MOPPING UP TO DO
CONTINUED ON 2nd PAGE FOLLOWING

AQUAMAN TEEN TITANS AND HAWK & DOVE © '97 DC NEWMAN, KUNDEL & GIORDANO OWN

The villainous Ocean Master menaces the Teen Titans and Hawk & Dove in Teen Titans #29 (Sep/Oct 1970). Art by Nick Cardy, story by Skeates. Splash from T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents #6 (Jul 1966), art by Ditko, script by Skeates. Hawk & Dove #1 (Aug/Sep 1968), cover by Ditko.

tinue them, so Dick decided to go to the DC."

"Dick was basically given a free hand with a bunch of specific older books and some new ones. "Aquaman was sort of the cream of the crop," Skeates remembers. "I got in there the day before Denny (O'Neal) ...so I got Aquaman and he got stuck with Bomba, The Jungle Boy."

The Aquaman creative team of Skeates, Aparo and Giordano, along with former artist Nick Cardy on covers, stayed together as a unit from issue #40 to the final #56. During their two-and-a-half year run, the team known as "S.A.G." transformed a pedestrian title into a book with touches of film noir, cultural satire, and relevance. Aparo's exciting art captured the claustrophobic feel of being underwater as well as the surrealism of other dimensions.

"When I was taking over Aquaman, Dick told me to 'make it a western.' I really liked the idea of Aquaman going from one little undersea community to another." The sea itself became incidental in later issues as the stories grew more complex– often interweaving two or more subplots within a story. Aquaman left Aquababy with the sitter and developed a new personality–a lean, edgy loner of few words, similar to Clint Eastwood's spaghetti westerns."

In many ways, Aquaman's innovations rivaled its contemporary at Marvel–Jim Steranko's Nick Fury, Agent of Shield. Was Steranko an influence? The question intrigues Skeates.

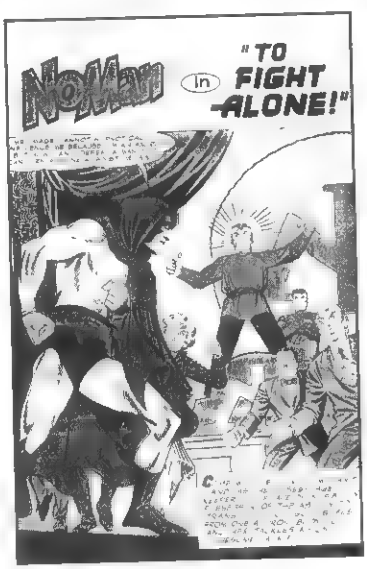
"I never thought of that. I used to talk to Steranko a lot whenever I ran into him because we had similar theories of how to tell a story. We were approaching things, I think, from the same visual idea. I was really into experimenting with the form."

Aquaman was dealt the severe blow of most innovative titles of the period: cancellation. Carmine Infantino, DC's Editorial Director, pulled the plug after issue #56, "The Creature That Devoured Detroit," a tough multi-level masterpiece that was too hard-hitting for the DC establishment.

"I got into trouble with Carmine. He really hated 'The Creature That Devoured Detroit.' I never found out why."

Skeates and Ditko's *The Hawk and The Dove* made its first appearance in *Showcase* #75 and then in six issues of their own magazine. While Ditko left after issue #2, Skeates stayed the run missing only issue #5, which was scripted by replacement artist Gil Kane. Though short lived, the series about two teenage brothers who are mysteriously granted personas reflecting their respective political persuasions, is well remembered today.

"Both Giordano and Ditko were basically hawks. . and I don't think they ever really understood where I was coming from with The Dove. They saw him as a wimp, where I saw him as a strong peacenik. They were continually changing things The Dove would do or say. We also had the problem of the Comic Code which said you couldn't question authority. That



put The Dove in a pretty tough place," Skeates chuckled.

Soon after *The Hawk and The Dove* folded in July 1969, the characters became members of *Teen Titans*, edited by Giordano. In mid-1970, Skeates became the title's regular writer, and, working with Nick Cardy, produced his best work to date, excluding Aquaman.

"There were a lot of *Teen Titan stories* I really quite liked. My favorite issue was #30, with its three weird stories: a lead-off tale in which the Titans never do get into costume; a Kid Flash story done up as a prose piece; and a bizarre little Aqualad tale about rock music."

When Giordano stepped away from the editor's desk in early 1971, Skeates' contributions to DC dwindled. "They canceled *Aquaman* even though sales were up. At that point I was not given anything for a while. I finally convinced Joe Orlando to give me some mystery stuff and built my way back in."

"I worked on *House Of Mystery* and *House Of Secrets* then moved on to *Supergirl*, working with Mike Sekowsky again. At the same time I was working for Warren. Then in 1973, I started on DC's *Plop*, which was based on my story 'The Poster Plague' for *The House Of Mystery*."

With Plop, Skeates was able to write humorous material, finding a niche he still excels in today. Ironically, all his ACBA and Shazam awards were for *Plop*, and not his superhero or mystery work.

Skeates continued with Warren, humor magazine work and occasional DC mystery assignments until 1975 when he began short-lived revivals of Plastic Man and the Blackhawks for DC. "Blackhawk and Plastic Man were fun–an opportunity for me to redevelop a bunch of famous characters and to work with George Evans, Ramona Fradon, and Bob Smith."

In the late '70's Skeates did some humor work for Gold Key, including UnderDog and Bugs Bunny. Later in the '80s, he did some television animation projects and wrote for Marvel's humor magazine, *Crazy*.

"By the late '80's, I was pretty much out of mainstream comics. I bartended and was a reporter for a while. I also did one of those weekly, local comic strips." Skeates then launched into independent comics, self-publishing half a dozen titles featuring private eye Norton J.. Written and drawn by Skeates, the critically acclaimed series nicely showcased his whimsical humor.

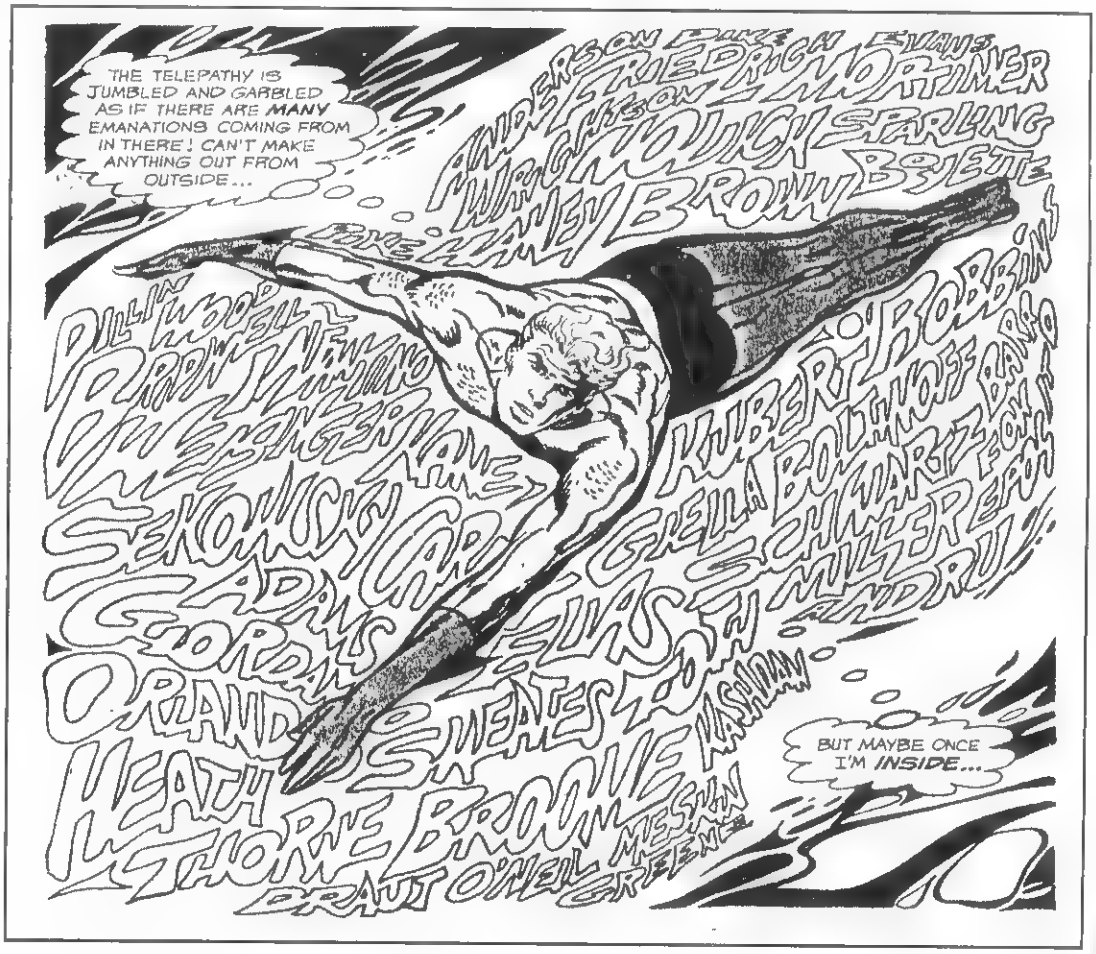
Skeates continues to keep an eye on mainstream comics. He recently wrote a series of essays on the fragile state of today's mainstream comic book. "I don't know where the mainstream is anymore. Lately, I've been noticing that people in the industry are shell shocked and unsure where the mainstream is going. When they're sweating it, things are really wrong." Still, Skeates would welcome another shot at DC or Marvel.

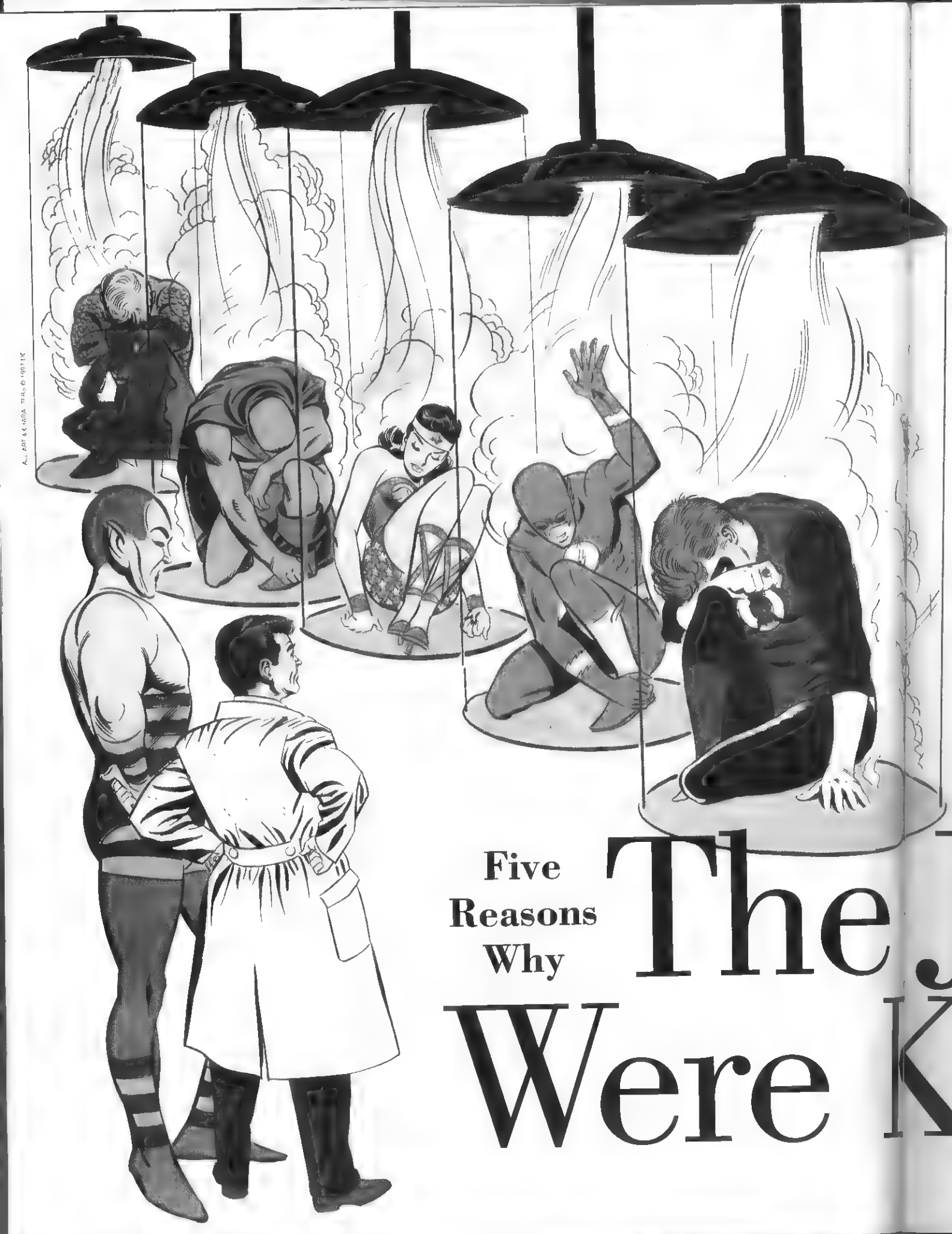
But even in today's confusing, twisted times, Skeates' innovative work for DC in the late '60's and early '70's still shows what a talented writer can accomplish by challenging himself and his audience. ■

Bob Brodsky is a stock broker in Los Angeles and specializes in comics published from 1967-73. His personal mission is to bring attention to other unsung heroes.

Writer extraordinaire... Steve Skeates.

One of the most famous panels in DC history... from Aquaman #50 (Mar/Apr 1970), art by Jim Aparo, script by


THE TELEPATHY IS JUMBLED AND GARBLED AS IF THERE ARE MANY EMANATIONS COMING FROM IN THERE! I CAN'T MAKE ANYTHING OUT FROM OUTSIDE...
BUT MAYBE ONCE I'M INSIDE...



Five Reasons Why

The J Were K

e JLA King!

By Craig Shutt

The 1960 debut of the Justice League generated more excitement than any other comic of its time. But making those stories work wasn't the no-brainer it may have appeared to be. In fact, the book included five key attitudes that made it stand out then and keeps it a classic today: Brains Defeat Brawn, Cunning Defeats Power, Teamwork Beats Individual Effort, Regular Guys Can Be Heroes, and Leave 'Em With A Lesson.

The first 12 adventures (*Brave & Bold* #28-30 and *JLA* #1 9) set the tone under the skillful direction of editor Julius Schwartz, writer Gardner Fox and artist Mike Sekowsky (along with inkers Murphy Anderson, Bernard Sachs and Joe Giella). When this team mixed those five ingredients with some good old Silver Age common sense, they found a recipe that really hit the spot for comics gourmands.

Brains Defeat Brawn

Schwartz and Fox loved to throw arcane scientific facts into stories. That came to the fore immediately when the team beat "Starro The Conqueror!" in *B&B* #28 (February/March 1960). The key came when Flash suggested

Upper left & left: The Leaguers (and readers) learn that you should always hear the other person's side of the story before thinking ill of their actions when they accuse their new member, Green Arrow, of betraying them in "When Gravity Went Wild!" (JLA #5, Jun/Jul 1961). Above: Bad luck villain, Professor Amos Fortune from JLA #6. Facing page: Professor Ivo, the scientific wizard, and his creation, the synthetic man, Amazo (B&B #30) as they steal the powers of the JLA.

Above: Three-eyed menace, Despero, takes over the JLA in "World Of No Return" (JLA #1, Oct/Nov 1960). Below: Alien dictator, Kanjar Ro of the Star-Sun Antares, describes his arch enemies in JLA #3 (Feb/Mar 1961).

that Green Lantern do a spectroscopic analysis of Snapper Carr's skin. Yikes! Good thinking, Scarlet Speedster! Have you ever seen him suggest this since? Fortunately, Barry (Flash) Allen was a police scientist, so at least it was possible for him to think to do it, if not plausible.

Similarly, it was really fortunate that Snapper was doing a term paper on the life span of animals in "The Case of the Stolen Super-Powers!" in *B&B* #30 (June/July 1960), so he'd know that a European catfish and cicada were the oldest of their species and thus were being stolen to concoct an immortality elixir. It was somewhat more plausible later in the issue for GL to have known chlorine gas was yellow and have used that to free himself from Amazo's power-ring commands, since he had a really keen interest in yellow things

More important than fun facts was the attitude that learning was a power unto itself. To solve the villain's riddle in "Challenge of the Weapons Master!" in *B&B* #29 (April/May 1960), the Flash raced to the local library and read through the entire encyclopedia at superspeed. Then to overcome the "Secret of the Sinister Sorcerers" in *JLA* #2 (December/January 1961), the League referred to its library, which Wonder Woman explained contained "all of Earth's knowledge."

The idea that books and libraries offer secret weapons to help combat villainy was summed up well by Wonder Woman in "The Wheel of Misfortune" in *JLA* #6 (August/September 1961) Snapper suggested that he should borrow Professor Amos Fortune's good-luck enhancing machine to help with Snap's exams. "Shame on you, Snapper!" chided the Amazon Princess. "You know that luck is no substitute for an education! Now go home and study for those tests!" Too bad we can't all study the way Flash does.

Cunning Defeats Power

Just as important as learning new things, JLA stories suggested, is knowing how to use what you already know and applying that knowledge in new ways. Major businesses pay consultants thousands of dollars to explain why it's important to "Think Outside Of The Box" when all these captains of industry really had to do was read a few old JLAs!

Often our heroes pretended to be captured so they could learn all the secrets before lowering the boom. Even everyone's least favorite member, Snapper, knew enough to play along in "The World of No Return!" in *JLA* #1 (October-November 1960) when he realized that Despero's mental domination wasn't affecting him. He waited for Despero to turn his back and then

"AS I AM DELON OF DHOR, SO MY ARCH-ENEMY HYATHIS IS PANALA* OF A NEIGHBORING PLANET, ALSTAIR..."
*EDITOR'S NOTE: EQUIVALENT TO AN EARTH QUEEN.
"ANOTHER RIVAL--THE METAL MAN KROMM--GROMAR* OF THE OUTERMOST PLANET OF OUR SOLAR SYSTEM, MOSTEEL..."
*EDITOR'S NOTE: EQUIVALENT TO AN EARTH KING.
"THEN THERE IS MY LAST OPPONENT, SAYYAR--JEFFAN* OF THE PLANET LLARR..."
*EDITOR'S NOTE: EQUIVALENT TO AN EARTH EMPEROR.

saved the day. Similar play-acting in *B&B* #30 allowed the chlorine-protected GL to march out behind his mesmerized teammates when Ivo released them and then return to clobber him J'onn J'onzz pulled the same trick against Prof. Fortune in *JLA* #6.

But the Leaguers have more cunning at their disposal than simply acting beaten at the right time. In "The Slave Ship of Space!" in *JLA* #3 (February/March 1961), Kanjar Ro double-crossed the League after they defeated his three enemies, who had to say Ro's name together to release earthlings from paralysis. Fortunately, Flash, Martian Manhunter and Wonder Woman, anticipating a double-cross, recorded the aliens' voices, so they could fix Ro's wagon anyway.

Clever thinking also saved the day when Green Arrow joined the team in "Doom of the Star Diamond!" in *JLA* #4 (April/May 1961). Wonder Woman and the Manhunter couldn't figure out how to deactivate an alien box from which a villain had removed the cloth covering. Finally the Amazon Princess suggested covering the box with the cloth. Sure enough, that revealed an invisible projection on top that turned out to be the off switch

It takes more than book learning to be smart, a JLA reader learns early and often; it pays to use what you know, play along rather than revealing everything at once, and think about problems from new perspectives

Teamwork Beats Individual Effort

Some fans say the membership became too unwieldy when Batman and Superman became regular participants around #10. When Atom and Hawkman joined, they complain, the stories became logistical management problems rather than strong adventures.

Nonsense! One of the JLA's great attractions was seeing these mini-team-ups we couldn't get anywhere else, even in later Brave & Bold matchings. For instance, *B&B* #28 has Green Lantern beating one Starro, Wonder Woman and the Manhunter tackling another, and Flash (and ultimately Snapper) taking on the third. How much fun is that?

However, with Superman and Batman playing larger roles in *JLA* #1, GL and Aquaman defeat a yellow glass that's evaporating the seas; Batman, the Manhunter and the Flash save an alien world from destruction, and last but not least,

I AM THE MOST POWERFUL CREATURE IN THE UNIVERSE, CREATED BY THE GREAT PROFESSOR IVO TO SERVE HIM... AND ASSIST HIM IN HIS CONQUEST OF EARTH!

Above: Kanjar Ro beams a bolt of radiation at J'onn J'onzz's forehead in chapter two of the "The Slave Ship Of Space" (JLA #3). Left: Gilded statues come alive and menace the emerald warrior in "Doom Of The Star Diamond". Below: Amazo describes his origin and his purpose to Wonder Woman in the "Case Of The Stolen Super-Powers!".

Superman and Wonder Woman escape a world filled with dinosaurs and kryptonite! Oh baby, you know what I like!

These team-ups gave us a chance to see two or even three heroes working together (an approach not even used in the Justice Society tales in *All-Star Comics*, which inspired the JLA). The best ones also showed the members

MY FINGERS ARE SAYING IT FOR ME, FLASH!
SNAP!
SNAP!
LATER, BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF ALL THE MEMBERS...
SNAPPER, IN APPRECIATION OF YOUR HELP, WE HAVE ELECTED YOU AN HONORARY MEMBER OF THE JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA! THIS BAND IS YOUR SIGNALING DEVICE! WEAR IT ALWAYS--YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN WE MAY CALL AN EMERGENCY MEETING!
WELL, SNAPPER... WHAT DO YOU SAY?

Above and right: Snapper Carr is elected as an honorary member of the JLA and is awarded his special signalling device... which alerts League members to emergency meetings. Below: The memorable splash page from JLA in issue #4 (Apr/May 1961)... Green Arrow joins the Justice League!

helping each other in ways they couldn't have achieved alone.

In "For Sale–The Justice League!" in *JLA* #8 (December/January 1962), for example, Aquaman ordered his finny friends to put out a fire weakening the Manhunter. J'onn J'onzz in turn saved Aquaman from his trap and then freed Wonder Woman, too. She threw her lasso up at GA, who was tied to a rocket shooting into space, and yanked him free. He shot arrows down at the Flash, slicing through a sticky rawhide net trapping him, and Flash super-sped over to catch a bullet before it could hit GL. This stuff never occurs to villains, because they think only of themselves–but heroes often look out for the other guy.

JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA
HEREBY ELECTS
GREEN ARROW
TO MEMBERSHIP FOR LIFE--WITH ALL PRIVILEGES AND GRATUITIES INCLUDING THE WEARING OF THE SIGNAL DEVICE AND POSSESSION OF THE GOLDEN KEY WHICH PERMITS ENTRY INTO THE SECRET SANCTUARY, ITS LIBRARY AND SOUVENIR ROOMS. IT IS HEREBY FURTHER RESOLVED AND ACTED UPON, THAT...
GREEN ARROW
SHALL RECEIVE A SPECIAL COMMENDATION FOR HIS EXPERT ASSISTANCE IN THE CASE WE HAVE ENTITLED ON OUR SCROLLS...
Doom of the Star Diamond!
WELCOME TO THE JUSTICE LEAGUE, GREEN ARROW!
SNAP!
The Roll Call
1. WONDER WOMAN
2. GREEN LANTERN
3. FLASH
4. J'ONN J'ONZZ
5. BATMAN
6. AQUAMAN
7. SNAPPER CARR
8. SUPERMAN
AND INCLUDING FOR THE FIRST TIME GREEN ARROW

Regular Guys Can Be Heroes

Some fans also complain that the art didn't do justice to the Justice League. They argue that Sekowsky's forte wasn't superheros, and his distinctive approach to anatomy and poses made these great heroes look awkward and unlike the muscular versions in their own issues.

But that look was part of the comic's appeal. Sekowsky and his long-time inker, Bernard Sachs, gave the book a distinctive look–you knew you were reading a JLA adventure when you saw those heroes done that way. Even better, the artists made our heroes look like real people wearing costumes. They didn't have bulky muscles showing through their uniforms, and they often were caught in poses in which regular people get caught.

The down-to-earth nature of these semi-cosmic heroes was driven home in the plots, too, even though many dealt with alien invaders. The stories often began with the heroes, in their civilian identities, learning of a danger that brought them together. They'd sit around and discuss it, team up to go battle it, and return to put the pieces together. They spent as much time thinking and talking about these adventures as the readers did!

For instance, one of the key stories in this period–"The Origin of the Justice League!" in *JLA* #9 (February 1962)–is told as a flashback after Snapper asked about a trophy while the heroes cleaned up the HQ for their anniversary bash. That's right, the Avengers had their own butler, but the JLAers weren't above picking up a mop! And what other team would spend an entire page marveling over the Atom's new chair when he joined up in the popular "The Menace of the 'Atom' Bomb!" in *JLA* #14 (September 1962)?

This regular-guy appeal really shone through when they visited "The Cosmic Fun-House!" in *JLA* #7 (October/November 1961). After hearing about its weirdness from Snapper, the Leaguers checked it out in their civilian identities, leading to big trouble.

When all was well again, the team returned–with dates! Diana Prince went with Steve Trevor, Clark Kent with Lois Lane, Bruce Wayne with Kathy (Batwoman) Kane, Hal Jordan with Carol

Ferris, Barry Allen with Iris West, Oliver Queen with Bonnie (Miss Arrowette) King and John Jones with policewoman Diana Meade. These Leaguers not only were regular people, they could get dates! That was more impressive than all their cosmic derring-do put together.

Leave 'Em With A Lesson

Many JLA stories were little morality plays, some more subtle than others. In *B&B* #29, time-traveler Xotar assumes he won't be affected by the missing words in an ancient book that seems to say he'll defeat the JLA. He learns you should always get all the information you can before you tackle a job and never skim over important stuff.

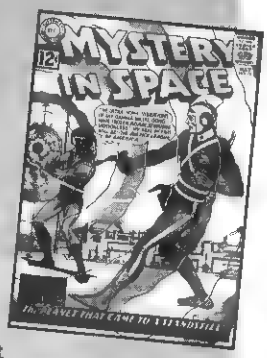
A key lesson was learned by the Leaguers (and readers) when the teammates assumed Green Arrow had betrayed them in "When Gravity Went Wild!", in *JLA* #5 (June/July 1961). They confronted him and presented their cases for how he caused them to lose their battles. But when GA provided his side, winding up the hero in the end, the members learned that sometimes things look different from another perspective and that it's best to hear the other person's side before accusing them.

Another lesson came from that wacky carnival in #7 when Flash, Wonder Woman, GA and GL were distorted by a fun-house mirror to be slow, fat, thick and forgetful, respectively. The four thought they were useless at stopping the alien bad guys, but with Aquaman's encouragement and direction, they learned that no handicap was too great to be overcome–not to mention that even the often useless-seeming King of the Seas had his strong points when out of his favorite element.

In issue #2, the JLA used magic to overcome three sorcerers, showing that when in Rome, it's best to do as the Romans do. As was pointed out earlier, before they did so, they read up on how to do it. That necessity was brought home at the end, when Snapper accidentally changed himself into a monster and the JLA had to undo the magic after mistakenly pounding a few lumps onto his head. "I hope this teaches you never to meddle in anything you don't understand, Snapper," Wonder Woman scolded. "That's a real hip quip, Wonder Woman," he replied in that annoying patter of his. "I know the score now–you bet!" If readers didn't, you can be sure they'd have the chance to learn it plenty more times.

A JLA MYSTERY IN SPACE

Justice League of America #3 1/2?



Justice League fans eager to see how another art team might handle the group didn't have to wait long. In Mystery in Space #75 (May 1962), the team showed up to help Adam Strange save "The Planet That Came To A Standstill!"

Although appearing the same month as *JLA* #11, *Mystery in Space* #75 fits neatly between the team's defeat of Kanjar Ro in "The Slave Ship of Space!" in *JLA* #3 (February/March 1961) and Green Arrow's induction in "Doom of the Star Diamond!" in *JLA* #4 (April/May 1961). If nothing else, it explains why the Flash, who hadn't met Adam Strange by *JLA* #3, decided to propose him for membership in *JLA* #4.

The story began with Snapper listening to a tape of Green Lantern describing the "Slave Ship" adventure. "Man, that was outsville!" Snapper said (don't worry, nobody back then knew what it meant either). "I wonder what that gruesome foursome is doing now?" That led us to Ro and his three villainous colleagues, who were imprisoned where the JLA left them at the end of #3.

Ro escaped and rowed his Slave Ship to Rann, where Adam and his main squeeze Alanna were enjoying the fact that Adam last came to Rann without the benefit of the zeta-beam, meaning he could stay as long as he wanted without worrying about the beam wearing off and returning him to Earth. (This happened a few times, leaving the writer, Gardner Fox, with the challenge of returning him to Earth some way so he had to stick his pumpkin head back under a zeta-beam and retain the strip's unique dramatic tension.)

Ro enslaved Rann and defeated Adam by banging his gamma gong (I love these weapons!), which paralyzed anyone within earshot. Adam escaped and concocted a plan to beat Ro that required Strange to row the Slave Ship to Earth and catch the next zeta-beam flight back to Rann. He left the ship in Africa where the beam struck, and Flash just happened to find it a few minutes later. Shocked at seeing the Slave Ship on Earth, Flash signaled the JLA, and GL took several members to check on Ro.

Back on Rann, Strange stopped Ro and then returned to Earth when the zeta beam wore off. There he met the JLAers who were just hanging out by the Slave Ship. After hasty explanations, they all rowed the boat to Rann, where they met up with the other members and fought Ro, who'd escaped Adam's trap. Ultimately, Strange saved the planet and the league, and they were impressed as all get out.

"Terrific!" the Flash thought. "I'm going to propose Adam Strange for membership in the Justice League at our next meeting!" That's exactly what he did in *JLA* #4, neatly answering the questions of why he proposed Adam and how the Scarlet Speedster even knew who the Hero of Rann was. It also no doubt created the Silver Age's first retroactive continuity implants, aka "retcons."

The story, written by Gardner Fox, also stands out for its terrific art, courtesy of Carmine Infantino and Murphy Anderson. They didn't have a lot of opportunity to draw the JLA members, as the primary focus was Adam. But it gave readers a glimpse of what the team would have looked like in other hands. Of particular note was the handling of Wonder Woman, who got the best facial expressions and looked darn right sultry compared to the other versions of her at the time.

The story also fits neatly into the message approach of the JLA books at the time. During the final battle, Adam stood silently by, watching the leaguers lose. Then, when the final member went down to defeat, he moved–and beat Ro.

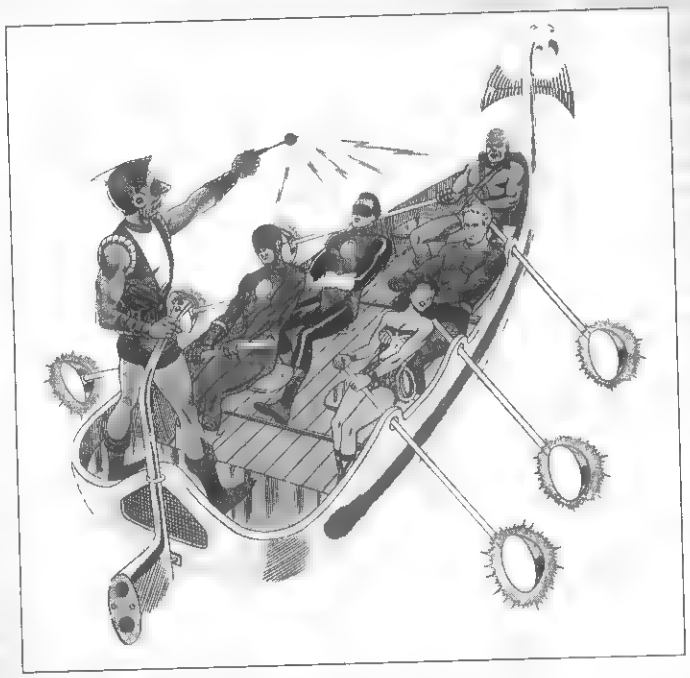
"To think I felt sorry for you, seeing you standing there so helpless," Wonder Woman told him. "I wasn't just standing there," Adam explained. "I was thinking! Boy, was I ever thinking! I had no super-powers to fight with, so I had to take time out and–THINK!" But then, out-thinking villains is a superpower heroes often use, as long-time JLA readers already had learned many times over. ■

Paul Gambaccini's JLA Archives

Originally published in Justice League Archive vol. 1 and is reprinted here with the kind permission of the author.

It is the last week of May, 1990, and I am walking down Sunset Boulevard waiting to interview the singer Lisa Stansfield. True, she is English and I live in London, but they tell me the Hollywood hills make for better television pictures than her manager's back yard, and I go where the work and the airline tickets take me.

Lisa is recovering from last night's show, so I have a few minutes to kill. I stroll into my favorite Los Angeles book store, which happens to be conveniently located across the street from Tower Records. Piled high on the counter are copies of the latest issue of an English literary magazine. A tease on the cover tells me why this esoteric publication has suddenly become what comics collectors might call a "hot book." This periodical contains the latest article by the suddenly most famous writer in the world, Salman Rushdie.



I am personally grateful to Mr. Rushdie. Not long ago he appeared for no fee at an AIDS fundraising reading I hosted. Indeed, I have had the perhaps unique pleasure of introducing both Salman Rushdie and Cat Stevens to live audiences, though not, I hasten to add, on the same occasion.

But now Salman Rushdie is not merely one of a handful of Britain's noblest novelists reading their work for free in the Shaw Theatre, Euston Road, London. Rushdie is on the run for his life, moving from one safe house to another, threatened by hired gunmen and religious zealots. When he isn't spending his time wondering whether it's safe to open the curtains, he is trying to keep his art and his mind in working order by doing what he does best, writing, and in this latest magazine article he is writing about the Justice League of America.

Pardon? Am I suffering from jet lag? Have I come eight thousand miles only to go completely mad? No, this is by the author of THE SATANIC VERSES, and he is writing about the Justice League of America.

It seems that in the early sixties Rushdie, like millions of boys, read DC comics. His favorite was JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA. He was an Indian from Bombay relocated to Great Britain, seeking a place in a culture to which he was alien. The young Rushdie was drawn to the central concept of the JLA's very name. The super-heroes who were members of the group comprised the Justice League of America, even though they weren't from it. Both Superman and J'onn J'onzz came from distant planets, and Wonder Woman hailed from Paradise Island. The Martian Manhunter even had green skin! Yet without any evidence of immigration obstacles of discrimination, they had been accepted in their chosen country. They had been fully integrated into their new homeland. Could the young Salman Rushdie achieve the same?

I momentarily forget about Lisa Stansfield, great voice and cute kiss curl though she may have. I am deeply touched that this talented novelist has taken time out from being the world's leading symbol of freedom of speech to share his memories of the Justice League of America. And yet I shouldn't be surprised. For all of us who were there, what is now called the Silver Age of comics is more than fondly remembered. For those of us who were deeply involved in the origins of comics fandom, it was an intense and enriching experience.

It is now 1992. Super-hero fans reading this in a comics store probably take many things about their hobby for granted. One is that there is such a thing as a comics store! In 1960 such dream palaces had not yet been conceived. Another assumption is that super-hero comic books exist. They have dominated the field for the last thirty years, true, but their very being was in peril in the mid-to-late fifties.

The most basic thing taken for granted by the modern super-hero fan is that his or her race exists at all. There were no such things as fans, only readers. We bought and read our comics in silence, perhaps sharing them with siblings and friends, but not knowing who outside our immediate circle shared our enthusiasm. The only previous comics fandom of note had been the E.C. Fan Addicts, and they were exclusively loyal to the quality line of books published in the early and mid-fifties by William M. Gaines, before the campaign to clean up the comics indiscriminately claimed suspect and innocent companies alike. Afterwards a few comic buffs occasionally raised their voices in science-fiction magazines, notably Xero, but most DC readers had no access to these.

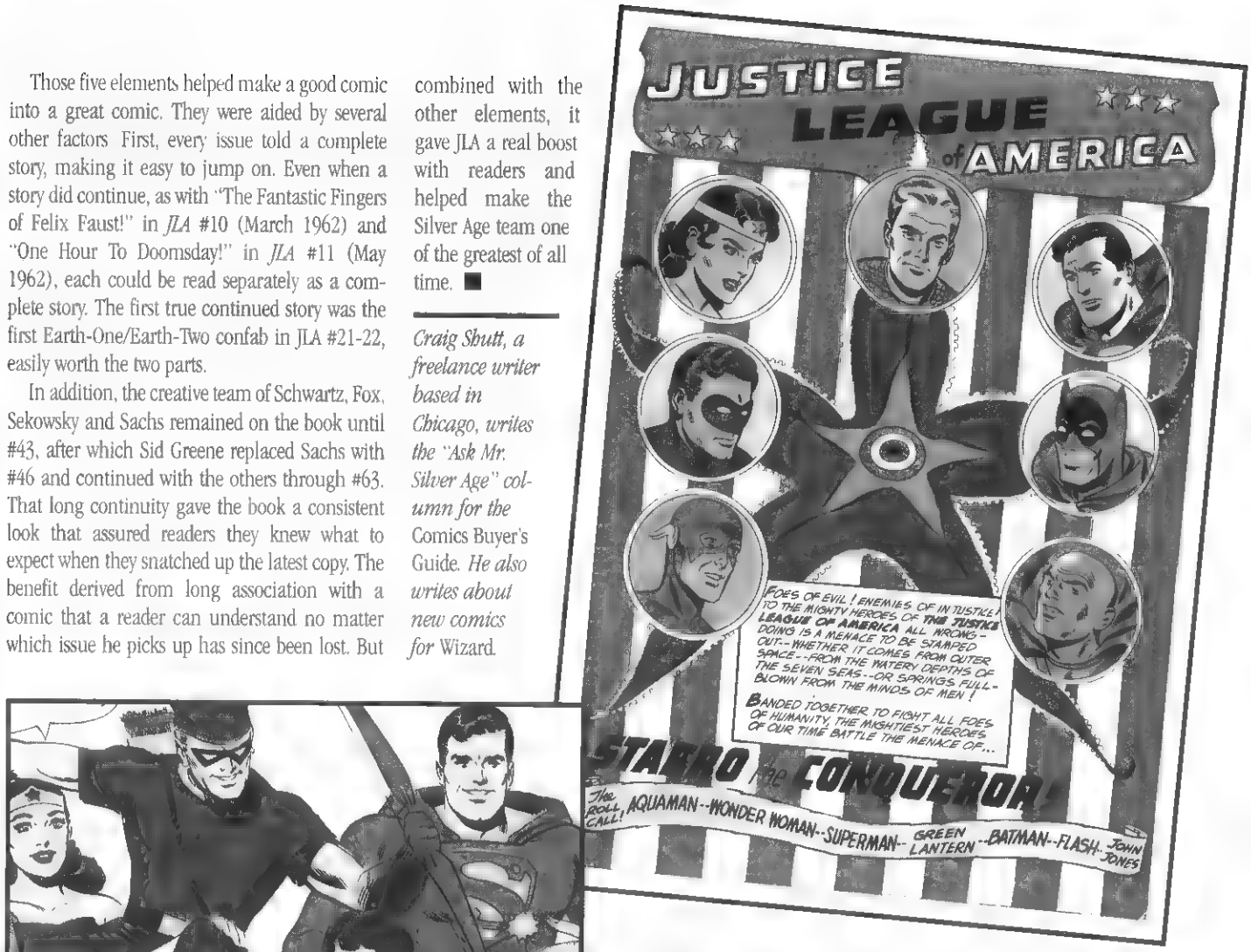
We comics kids assumed there had to be others out there who had the same feelings we did, but we didn't know who "we" were. Julius Schwartz, our favorite DC editor, made it possible for us to find out. In 1960 he began the letter page Flash-Grams in THE FLASH. But although we now knew who our most vocal peers were, we were still unable to corre-

Continued on page 35

Those five elements helped make a good comic into a great comic. They were aided by several other factors First, every issue told a complete story, making it easy to jump on. Even when a story did continue, as with "The Fantastic Fingers of Felix Faust!" in *JLA* #10 (March 1962) and "One Hour To Doomsday!" in *JLA* #11 (May 1962), each could be read separately as a complete story. The first true continued story was the first Earth-One/Earth-Two confab in JLA #21-22, easily worth the two parts.

In addition, the creative team of Schwartz, Fox, Sekowsky and Sachs remained on the book until #43, after which Sid Greene replaced Sachs with #46 and continued with the others through #63. That long continuity gave the book a consistent look that assured readers they knew what to expect when they snatched up the latest copy. The benefit derived from long association with a comic that a reader can understand no matter which issue he picks up has since been lost. But combined with the other elements, it gave JLA a real boost with readers and helped make the Silver Age team one of the greatest of all time. ■

Craig Shutt, a freelance writer based in Chicago, writes the "Ask Mr. Silver Age" column for the Comics Buyer's Guide. *He also writes about new comics for* Wizard.


JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA
FOES OF EVIL! ENEMIES OF INJUSTICE! TO THE MIGHTY HEROES OF THE JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA ALL WRONG-DOING IS A MENACE TO BE STAMPED OUT--WHETHER IT COMES FROM OUTER SPACE--FROM THE WATERY DEPTHS OF THE SEVEN SEAS--OR SPRINGS FULL-BLOWN FROM THE MINDS OF MEN!
BANDED TOGETHER TO FIGHT ALL FOES OF HUMANITY, THE MIGHTIEST HEROES OF OUR TIME BATTLE THE MENACE OF...
STARRO the CONQUEROR!
THE ROLL CALL! AQUAMAN--WONDER WOMAN--SUPERMAN--GREEN LANTERN--BATMAN--FLASH--JOHN JONES
SNAP!

Above: The seven members of the JLA are introduced on one of the most famous splash pages in Silver Age history! Left: A close-up of the League welcoming Green Arrow joins the JLA in issue #4. Below: The "stunning anouncement" in chapter 4 of "When Gravity Went Wild" (JLA #5).

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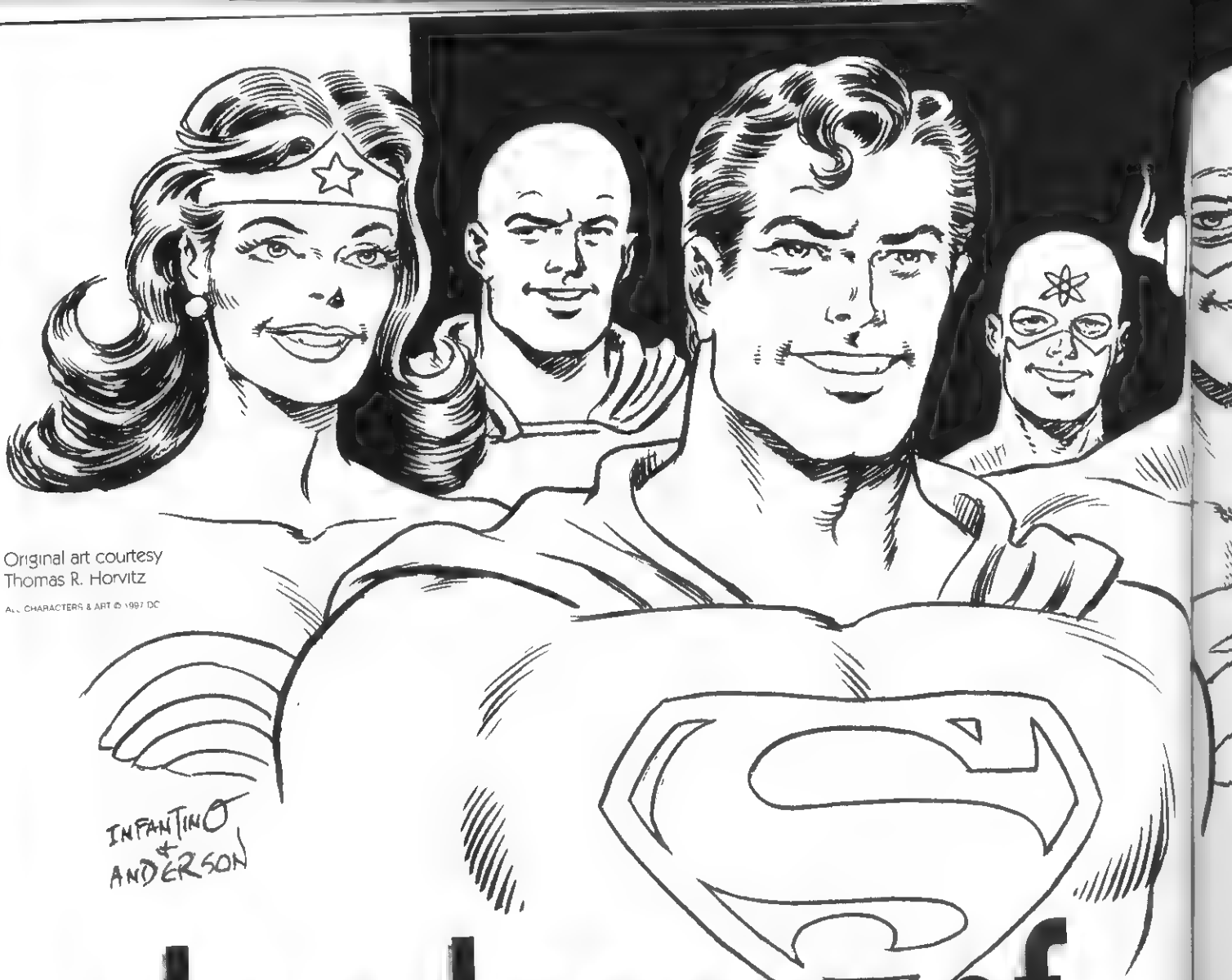


Original art courtesy
Thomas R. Horvitz

ALL CHARACTERS & ART © 1997 DC

In a League of their own

By Harry B. Thomas with Gary M. Carter

Foes of Evil! Enemies of Injustice! To the mighty heroes of the Justice League of America all wrong-doing is a menace to be stamped out–whether is comes from outer space–from the watery depths of the Seven Seas–or springs full-blown from the minds of men! Banded together to fight all foes of humanity, the mightiest heroes of our time battle the menace of Starro the Conqueror!

Thus began the first of three "tryout" installments for Justice League of America. *Brave and the Bold* #28 (February/March, 1960) was a momentous event which shook every comic book rack across the country. Not since the cover of *Showcase* #4 dominated newsstands three and one half years earlier, had there been a comic book so breathlessly anticipated by casual readers and fanatic collectors alike. To those born early enough to have enjoyed the exploits of the Justice Society of America in *All Star Comics* (1940-1951), the concept was excitingly familiar. But to the vast army of baby boomers born in the late '40s and early '50s, this totally "new" concept of combining several of one's favorite heroes in a single story...in a single comic book...all pictured on the same unbelievably colorful cover...Wow!!!!.... Whew!!!! This was the stuff that the most vivid and beloved comic book memories are made from!!!!

Yet it wasn't always this exciting at DC Comics. The years between the last Golden Age appearance of the Flash in *Flash Comics* #104 (February, 1949) and the character's revival in *Showcase* #4 (September/October, 1956) are considered by most fans as a low ebb in the tide of the superhero comic book genre. DC Comics unleashed a flood of, to say the least, "unlikely" concepts on comic book fans. They included the likes of Super Baby, Bizzaro, Krypto, Bat Mite, and Bat Hound. There was green, red, blue, gold, white, and rainbow kryptonite; even a chimp detective. DC's line of science fiction, mystery, western, war, teenage humor, funny animal and romance comics often seemed

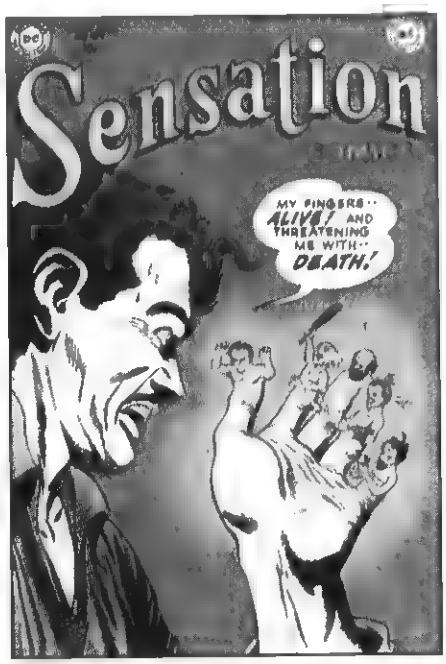
"I'd been collecting JLA since it started. Then I found my first copy of Sensation Comics #109 (the last issue). it looked vaguely familiar somehow... but I couldn't put my finger on it!"
—Gary M. Carter

like classics when compared to their superhero storylines.

Over at (what would soon be) Marvel Comics their specialty was monster comics featuring such interesting but repetative creatures as Trogg, Grogg, Progg, Frogg and Cazoom. Marvel's western and romance titles suffered from a similar reliance on formula themes.

Then a tiny step toward the light occurred in the 225th issue of *Detective Comics*, cover dated November, 1955. A new superhero was introduced as a back-up feature to Batman. The character J'onn J'onzz (Manhunter from Mars) was not truly original in that he was basically a clone of Superman. He could fly, had super strength, and the added ability to make himself invisible. He also had green skin when not in his earthly disguise. While kryptonite did not have any effect on him, fire could destroy him; even a closeness to it could weaken and rob him of his powers. Sound a bit familiar? It sounded familiar to many thousands of readers, too.

Yet J'onn J'onzz' claims a fame which is two-fold; first, some comic book historians suggest he was technically the first DC Silver Age superhero. (Others suggest the Silver Age of comics starts with *Showcase* #4.) Second, he was chosen, in spite of his "back-up feature status" as a charter member of the Justice League of America! At the time of J'onn J'onzz comic book



12¢
JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA
Featuring THE WORLD'S GREATEST SUPER-HEROES in "The FANTASTIC FINGERS of FELIX FAUST!"
NOW THAT I HAVE THE ENTIRE JUSTICE LEAGUE AT MY FINGERTIPS, NOTHING CAN STOP ME FROM CASTING MY EVIL SPELLS OVER THE EARTH!

ALL CHARACTER & COVERS © 1997 DC

birth, the only costumed heroes still around in their own DC Comics were Superman, Batman, Superboy and Wonder Woman. Superman, Batman and Superboy were also appearing in *Action Comics, Detective Comics* and *Adventure Comics*, respectfully. Additionally, Batman and Superman were also appearing in *World's Finest Comics* as a team while such characters as Aquaman, Green Arrow and Congorilla were placed in these same titles as back-up features. If J'onn J'onzz created a crack in the comic book mediocrity of the day, *Showcase* #4 in late 1956, busted things wide open!

In the late '50s there were still some staffers at DC Comics who had worked on the Golden Age line-up during the late 1940s and early 1950s. This elite group was comprised of artists, writers, and in particular, one very special editor! The artists still on staff read like a Silver Age "Who's Who" Joe Kubert, Murphy Anderson, Carmine Infantino, Russ Heath, Gil Kane and Jack Kirby!

A most prominent, prolific, and capable writer from the golden years was Gardner F. Fox, DC's "Dean of Science Fiction." As was to be seen, he (as well as the aforementioned artists) still demonstrated that sense of wonder required to qualify as a truly great comic pro of the '30s and '40s. However, without the guiding hand of a certain editor, it is doubtful (even with all the other talent on hand) that DC or any other company could have manifested one of the most exciting times in comic book history, a rebirth of the comic book hero known as the Silver Age of comics!

Simply put, the genius most responsible for the Silver Age was Julius Schwartz. Schwartz had been around (some say) since the writing of Genesis! He had at least been around since the early '30s, working with science fiction pulp magazines and co-editing the first fan related magazine (fanzine) of that decade, titled *The Time Traveller*! From his experience with science fiction's first fanzine, he moved into the agency business, acting on behalf of some of the finest science fiction writers of the day. By the early '40s, the pulp magazine was beginning a slow decline in popularity and Mr. Schwartz began looking elsewhere to ply his trade.

Through a professional contact, he was recommended to Sheldon Mayer (an editor at DC) in reference to a vacancy. He interviewed, got the job, and 30 plus years later, he is considered the "Godfather" of the Silver Age! During the first few years at DC, Schwartz had, in one creative way or another, responsibility for some of the company's finest characters–the Flash, Hawkman, Atom, Johnny Thunder, and the most legendary comic team ever produced, the Justice Society of America in *All Star Comics*! By the late 1940s, except for the characters noted earlier, most of DC's superheros had disappeared from the comic racks. For the next few bleak years, DC would struggle with many different concepts in an effort to re-establish sales and excitement in their comic books. Nothing really dynamic would occur on the superhero front until late in 1956.

In March of 1956, DC debuted a comic titled *Showcase*, the premise of which was to preview new titles to the market place,

check the interest (by measuring sales and reader response), and then determine whether to publish that particular title on an ongoing basis. It was to prove to be one of the best marketing ideas DC would ever develop! This title, along with its sister title *Brave and the Bold* became the proving grounds that launched DC's characters into stardom and began the Silver Age of comics.

The first three issues of *Showcase* (Fire Fighters, King of the Wild and The Frogmen), although interesting to collectors, gave no clues to prepare comic book fans for the coming revitalization of the industry. And then with issue #4, Julius Schwartz hit the mark! Comic book history began a new era and (according to most historians) the Silver Age was officially born! This would be the issue in which "Julie" Schwartz would rejuvinate and modernize one of the Golden Age's most popular superheros, the Flash. On hand to assist in this labor of love were the great Carmine Infantino (pencils), the incomparable Joe Kubert (inking) and the ever-consistent Robert Kanigher (writer). The sales of *Showcase* #4 were good enough for a second trial in issue #8 and this led to two more tryouts in issues #13 and #14. DC had a hit and the most historically significant DC Silver Age hero was born..

Following DC's lead, Archie Comics would publish *The Double Life Of Private Strong* in June, 1959, introducing the superhero character the Fly. He immediately won his own title in *Adventures of the Fly* #1 in August, lasting to 1967 (with several title changes). *Adventures of the Jaguar*, a companion title, appeared in September, 1961.

DC was relatively cautious about getting the Flash into his own book after his four tryout issues in *Showcase*, but eventually the Flash was given his own magazine. It was numbered 105 (February/March, 1959), starting the series where his Golden Age predecessor left off.

With the Flash a hit, his place as a founding member of the JLA was a certainty. However, it should be noted for comic book historians that DC had probably not the slightest clue that *Showcase* #4 (and its star, the Flash) would have such a gigantic impact on the industry as a whole. Because of this, an interesting correlation can be suggested between *Action* #1 and *Showcase* #4. For many baby boomers who cut their teeth on the comics of the middle and late '50s, *Showcase* #4 was their *Action* #1.)

Moreover, the superhero, backbone of the comics industry, had climbed out of the decline of the early 1950s. The costumed hero was back! The Flash was a hit, and another costumed hero team book entitled *Challengers of the Unknown* (illustrated by Jack Kirby and edited by Jack Schiff) also looked like a winner. Comics were about to become colorful, fun and imaginative once more. One could feel the fresh air blowing through the industry.

Gambaccini *continued from page*

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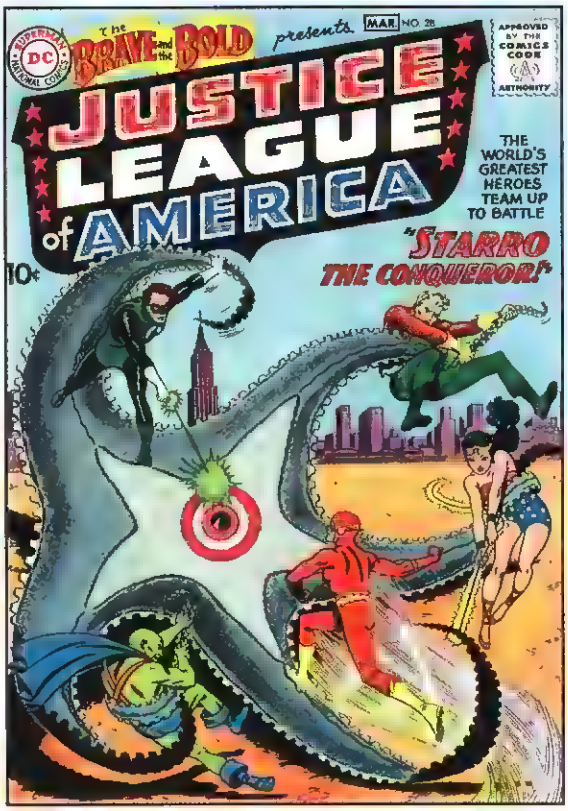
But now Salman Rushdie is not merely one of a handful of Britain's noblest novelists reading their work for free in the Shaw Theatre, Euston Road, London. Rushdie is on the run for his life, moving from one safe house to another, threatened by hired gunmen and religious zealots. When he isn't spending his time wondering whether it's safe to open the curtains, he is trying to keep his art and his mind in working order by doing what he does best, writing, and in this latest magazine article he is writing about the Justice League of America.

Pardon? Am I suffering from jet lag? Have I come eight thousand miles only to go completely mad? No, this is by the author of THE SATANIC VERSES, and he is writing about the Justice League of America.

It seems that in the early sixties Rushdie, like millions of boys, read DC comics. His favorite was JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA. He was an Indian from Bombay relocated to Great Britain, seeking a place in a culture to which he was alien. The young Rushdie was drawn to the central concept of the JLA's very name. The super-heroes who were members of the group comprised the Justice League of America, even though they weren't from it. Both Superman and J'onn J'onzz came from distant planets, and Wonder Woman hailed from Paradise Island. The Martian Manhunter even had green skin! Yet without any evidence of immigration obstacles of discrimination, they had been accepted in their chosen country. They had been fully integrated into their new homeland. Could the young Salman Rushdie achieve the same?

I momentarily forget about Lisa Stansfield, great voice and cute kiss curl though she may have. I am deeply touched that this talented novelist has taken time out from being the world's leading symbol of freedom of speech to share his memories of the Justice League of America. And yet I shouldn't be surprised. For all of us who were there, what is now called the Silver Age of comics is more than fondly remembered. For those of us who were deeply involved in the origins of comics fandom, it was an intense and enriching experience.

It is now 1992. Super-hero fans reading this in a comics store probably take many things about their hobby for granted. One is that there is such a thing as a comics store! In 1960 such dream palaces had not yet been conceived. Another assumption is that super-hero comic books exist. They have dominated the field for the last thirty years, true, but their very *Continued on page 36*


The BRAVE and the BOLD presents MAR NO. 28
JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA
THE WORLD'S GREATEST HEROES TEAM UP TO BATTLE
"STARRO THE CONQUEROR!"
10¢
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

The BRAVE and the BOLD presents
JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA
10¢
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
JULY NO. 30
ONE BY ONE I'M TRANSFERRING THE SUPER-POWERS OF THE JUSTICE LEAGUE MEMBERS TO AMAZO --THE SYNTHETIC MAN I CREATED! THEN-- NOTHING WILL STOP US FROM CONQUERING THE EARTH!
A star-studded spectacular...
"The Case of the STOLEN SUPER-POWERS!"

10¢
JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
NOV
I'VE GOT THIS GAME RIGGED SO THAT EVERY-TIME FLASH MAKES A MOVE, A MEMBER OF THE JUSTICE LEAGUE DISAPPEARS FROM THE FACE OF THE EARTH!
A STAR-STUDDED SPECTACULAR--
"WORLD OF NO RETURN!"

Brave & Bold #28 (Feb/Mar 1960) introduced readers to the Justice League of America, but didn't reveal the team's origin. It marked the first use of their famous signal devices.

Brave & Bold #29 (Apr/May 1960) harkens back to the JLA's predecessor, the Justice Society of America. Artist Mike Sekowsky was likely inspired by the cover of All-Star #43 (Oct/Nov 1948).

Brave & Bold #30 (Jun/Jul 1960) introduces the now classic villains Professor Ivo and his android Amazo.

JLA #1 (Oct/Nov 1960) presents the first appearance of Despero, who is so popular today he's become an action figure.

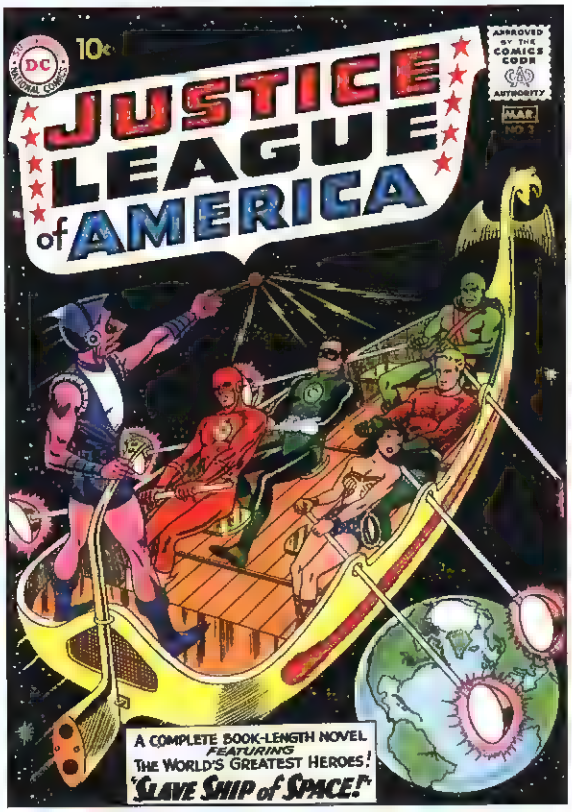
JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA

JLA #2 (Dec 1960/Jan 1961) introduced Snapper Carr's younger brother Jimmy, as well as Simon Magus, a sorcerer who returned to menace Superman and Batman in the 1980s.

JLA #3 (Feb/Mar 1961) introduced one of the greatest JLA villains, Kanjar Ro! Soon after, Ro battled Adam Strange in Mystery in Space #75, bringing "the thinking man's hero" and the JLA together for the first time.

JLA #6 (Aug/Sep 1961) introduces villain Professor Amos Fortune, aka Mister Memory. Issue #6 marks the first in which Superman and Batman don't appear.

JLA #7 (Oct/Nov 1961) stands out for its inclusion of each hero's significant other, right down to Snapper's girlfriend, Midge.



10¢
JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA
SEPT
"The WHEEL of MISFORTUNE!"
WITH EVERY TURN OF THE WHEEL, ANOTHER CHARGE OF BAD LUCK SHOOTS THROUGH THE JUSTICE LEAGUE MEMBERS—WHICH NOT EVEN THEIR SUPER-POWERS CAN OVERCOME!

10¢
JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA
NOV
FUN-HOUSE MIRROR
THE JUSTICE LEAGUE MEMBERS DON'T REALIZE IT—BUT THEY'VE REALLY CHANGED INTO THE VERY DISTORTIONS THEY SEE OF THEMSELVES IN THE MIRROR!
featuring THE WORLD'S GREATEST SUPER-HEROES in "The COSMIC FUN-HOUSE!"

STILL 10¢
JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MAY
THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO FREE THE JUSTICE LEAGUE MEMBERS IMPRISONED INSIDE THAT DIAMOND--SPLIT IT IN TWO WITH THIS DIAMOND-TIPPED ARROW!
HERE IT IS--THE STORY YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR...!
GREEN ARROW JOINS THE JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA in "DOOM of the STAR DIAMOND!"

STILL 10¢
JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
JULY
GREAT HERA! AN UNKNOWN FORCE IS PULLING US INTO SPACE--LIKE HUMAN ROCKETS!
A STAR-STUDDED SPECTACULAR WITH THE WORLD'S GREATEST SUPER-HEROES... "WHEN GRAVITY WENT WILD!"

JLA #4 (Apr/May 1961) is memorable as a key moment in JLA history, inducting Green Arrow, its first new member. Other heroes suggested for membership included Adam Strange and Hawkman.

JLA #5 (Jun/Jul 1961) introduced Dr. Destiny, a recurring villain. It also includes a cameo by a villain from each member's rogues gallery.

JAN
JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
12¢
SOLD
AND NOW, FELLOW-CRIMINALS -- HOW MUCH AM I BID FOR GREEN LANTERN?
A SUPER-STAR SPECTACULAR . . . "FOR SALE--THE JUSTICE LEAGUE!"

JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
12¢
FEB.
REVEALED AT LAST... "THE ORIGIN of the JUSTICE LEAGUE!"
THAT GLOWING METEOR--TURNING US ALL INTO TREES!

JLA #8 (Dec 1961/Jan 1962) features an impressive cover of the key members in "For Sale–The Justice League!" For the second time, Superman and Batman don't appear in the story.

JLA #9 (Feb 1962) this highly sought after issue features "The Origin of the Justice League!" This story officially precedes B&B #28 and is told in flashbacks to Snapper and Green Arrow.

JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA

JLA #10 (Mar 1962) kicks off two connected but separate adventures. The design for the cover of "The Fantastic Fingers of Felix Faust!" may have been inspired by the cover to Sensation #109 (May/Jun 1952)–for a look, see CBM #41, page 24!

JLA #11 (May 1962) revolves around the three demons Faust released into the world last issue. "One Hour To Doomsday!" features Abnegazar, Rath and Ghast as well as the Lord of Time.

JLA #14 (Sep 1962) the JLA add their second new member, the Atom. Amos Fortune returns in "The Menace of the 'Atom' Bomb.

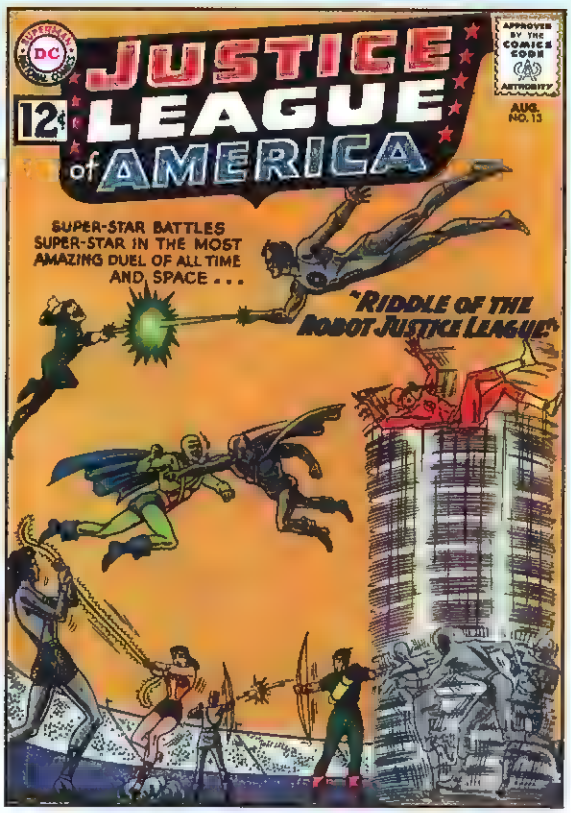
JLA #15 (Nov 1962) Stone giants threaten the Earth with the dreaded Cobalt Bomb.

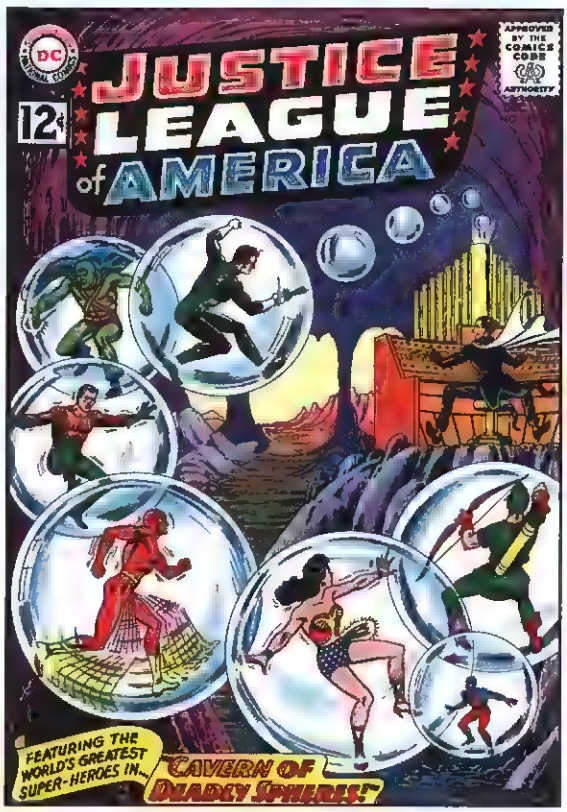
MAR. NO 10
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
12¢
JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA
Featuring THE WORLD'S GREATEST SUPER-HEROES in...
"The Fantastic Fingers of Felix Faust!"
NOW THAT I HAVE THE ENTIRE JUSTICE LEAGUE AT MY FINGERTIPS, NOTHING CAN STOP ME FROM CASTING MY EVIL SPELLS OVER THE EARTH!

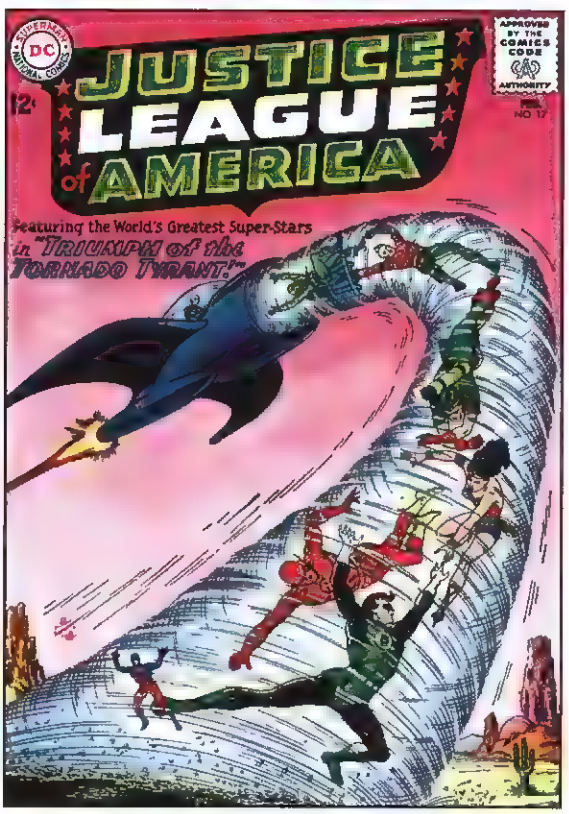
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
12¢
JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA
MAY NO 11
Featuring THE WORLD'S GREATEST SUPER-STARS in...
"ONE HOUR to DOOMSDAY!"
AS SOON AS I IMPRISON THE JUSTICE LEAGUE IN THESE FLASKS, I'LL BEGIN MY ONE-HOUR CONQUEST OF THE EARTH!
MOMMY QUEEN
THE FLASH
AQUAMAN
WONDER WOMAN
GREEN LANTERN

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
SEPT
12¢
JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA
WHEN I BOWL OVER THE JUSTICE LEAGUE MEMBERS--THE EXPLOSION WILL BLAST THEM TO SMITHEREENS!
The ATOM JOINS THE JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA IN...
"MENACE OF THE 'ATOM' BOMB!"

JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA
12¢
JUNE NO. 12
A SUPER-STAR SPECTACULAR...
LAST CASE OF THE JUSTICE LEAGUE!
NOW THAT MY LIGHT-BEAMS HAVE MADE THE JUSTICE LEAGUE MOTIONLESS--I'LL BLAST THEM OUT OF THIS UNIVERSE!


JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA
12¢
AUG. NO. 13
SUPER-STAR BATTLES SUPER-STAR IN THE MOST AMAZING DUEL OF ALL TIME AND SPACE . . .
"RIDDLE OF THE ROBOT JUSTICE LEAGUE!"





JLA #12 (Jun 1962) introduces long-running villain Dr. Light in what he hoped would be "The Last Case of the Justice League!"

JLA #13 (Aug 1962) should have featured a return of Amos Fortune, but instead the team solved "The Riddle of the Robot Justice League!" and dueled their robotic duplicates on an alien world. Several sidekicks (Speedy, Thomas Kalmaku, and Jimmy Olsen) make cameo appearances.

JLA #16 (Dec 1962), the JLA dance to the tune of the Maestro in "The Cavern of Deadly Spheres!"

JLA #17 (Feb 1963) features a return of the Tornado Tyrant after his defeat in Mystery In Space #61.

JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA

In JLA #18 (Mar 1963) their mighty powers are of absolutely no use against the three Invulnerable Protectors of Starzl. The letters page features classic letters from now well-known readers Paul Gambaccini & Roy Thomas.

The cover of JLA #19 (May 1963) was clearly inspired by the cover of Mystery In Space #17, and features a letter from fandom-great... Jerry Bails.

With a cover reminiscent of Mystery In Space #18, the highly collectible JLA #22 (Sep 1963) continues the "Crisis" epic.

JLA #38 (Sep 1965) showcases the "colossal battle" waged between Earth 2's JSA and Earth-A's Lawless League.

JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA
MAR. NO. 18
12¢
S.O.S.
ONLY THE ATOM CAN STOP OUR RAPID SHRINKING IN SIZE! BUT NONE OF OUR DANGER SIGNALS IS REACHING HIM!
FEATURING THE WORLD'S GREATEST SUPER-HEROES IN... "JOURNEY INTO THE MICRO-WORLD!"

JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA
SEPT. NO. 22
12¢
ONLY BY USING THE COMBINED MIGHT OF OUR POWER RINGS CAN WE HOPE TO FREE OUR FELLOW-MEMBERS TRAPPED IN THOSE SPACE-PRISONS!
A SENSATIONAL SUPER-STAR SPECTACULAR FEATURING THE JUSTICE LEAGUE and JUSTICE SOCIETY... "CRISIS on EARTH-TWO!"

JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA
SEPT NO. 38
12¢
THE JUSTICE SOCIETY OF EARTH-2
THE LAWLESS LEAGUE OF EARTH-A
NEVER IN COMIC BOOK HISTORY HAS THERE BEEN A FIGHT TO EQUAL THE COLOSSAL BATTLE WAGED BETWEEN SUPER-HEROES AND ASTONISHING SUPER-VILLAINS AS IN... "CRISIS on EARTH-A!"
ATOM
DOCTOR FATE
FLASH
GREEN LANTERN
HAWKMAN
MR. TERRIFIC
ATOM
BATMAN
FLASH
GREEN LANTERN
JOHN JONZZ
SUPERMAN
DON'T BELIEVE WHAT YOU SEE!... NOTHING IN THIS STORY IS WHAT IT SEEMS TO BE! EVERY PAGE WILL SURPRISE AND THRILL YOU!

ALL CHARACTERS & COVES © 1997 DC

JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA
12¢
WAS THE GIANT SPACEMAN A MENACE--OR BENEFACTOR--TO EARTH?
TWO OPPOSING TEAMS OF SUPER-HEROES VIE WITH EACH OTHER TO SOLVE... "The MYSTERY of SPACEMAN X!"

JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA
12¢
BACK AFTER 12 YEARS! THE LEGENDARY SUPER-STARS OF THE JUSTICE SOCIETY OF America..!
Featuring "CRISIS on EARTH-ONE!"

JLA #20 (Jun 1963) two superhero teams compete to solve the "Mystery of Spaceman X".

One of the most historic JLA issues, #21 (Aug 1963) features the long-awaited return of the Justice Society of America not seen since All Star #57. This issues remains one of most collectible Silver Age DCs, with high-grade copies consistently selling for premium prices.

DC
ALL NEW STORIES
NOW ONLY 20¢
JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA
NO. 100 AUG.
SUPERMAN
BATMAN
THE FLASH
GREEN LANTERN
HERE LIES THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER OF VICTORY
33★HEROES★33
THE GREATEST GATHERING OF SUPER-STARS EVER RECORDED! THE 10TH ANNUAL TEAM-UP OF THE JUSTICE LEAGUE & JUSTICE SOCIETY... IN SEARCH OF the SEVEN SOLDIERS OF VICTORY!

MYSTERY IN SPACE
12¢
MAY NO. 75
THE ULTRA-SONIC VIBRATIONS OF MY GAMMA METAL GONG HAVE FROZEN ADAM STRANGE MOTIONLESS! MY NEXT VICTIMS WILL BE--THE JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA!
NOVEL STARRING ADAM STRANGE...
The PLANET THAT CAME TO A STANDSTILL!

JLA #100 (Aug 1972) has become a high-demand Bronze Age collectible, and features the Seven Soldiers of Victory.

Mystery In Space #75 (May 1972) amazed and delighted young readers from coast to coast. Still considered one of the great Silver Age DC books, it continues to be in extremely high demand in all grades. A sequel to JLA #3, some affectionately refer to MIS #75 as "JLA #3 ½".

Gambaccini *continued from page 35* being was in peril in the mid-to-late fifties.

The most basic thing taken for granted by the modern super-hero fan is that his or her race exists at all. There were no such things as fans, only readers. We bought and read our comics in silence, perhaps sharing them with siblings and friends, but not knowing who outside our immediate circle shared our enthusiasm. The only previous comics fandom of note had been the E.C. Fan Addicts, and they were exclusively loyal to the quality line of books published in the early and mid-fifties by William M. Gaines, before the campaign to clean up the comics indiscriminately claimed suspect and innocent companies alike. Afterwards a few comic buffs occasionally raised their voices in science-fiction magazines, notably Xero, but most DC readers had no access to these.

We comics kids assumed there had to be others out there who had the same feelings we did, but we didn't know who "we" were. Julius Schwartz, our favorite DC editor, made it possible for us to find out. In 1960 he began the letter page Flash-Grams in THE FLASH. But although we now knew who our most vocal peers were, we were still unable to correspond with them. The letter column only gave the name and town of the writer. The indispensable ingredient was added in 1961 when Schwartz started printing street addresses as well. Letters now flew not only to 575 Lexington Avenue but to homes across the country. More than postcards and envelopes were exchanged: the first fanzines found their way to us.

Jerry Bails saw my Flash-Gram and mailed me a sample copy of the publication he had just started with Roy Thomas. I could not contain my excitement the Saturday that the first issue of Alter Ego arrived at 8 Elizabeth Drive, Westport, Connecticut. I remember it was a Saturday because my father was home, and the reason I recall he was at home was that on seeing the amateur magazine he moaned "How can you read such garbage?" This was a complement to his 1957 complaint "How can you listen to this damn music?" when he caught me with Elvis Presley on the radio.

It's moments like these that make you realize you are an independent person with values and priorities of your own. Alter Ego was not garbage, it was great, and it was a lifeline! Here were two men–one of them an Assistant Professor, for heaven's sake!–and they loved the comics I loved! And how they loved the JLA! The first Alter Ego cover, the first glimpse I ever got of comics fandom, was Roy Thomas's JLA parody, the Bestest League of America.

I had to have more! I subscribed to Alter Ego and, as quickly as I learned of its existence, Comic Art, the work of Don and Maggie Thompson. Yes, the Beatles were shortly to affect popular culture in a wider way, but it would be right to say that Jerry, Roy, Don and Maggie were the Fab Four of Fandom. Their two pioneer publications introduced us to each other, bound us together and taught us. People who actually had knowledge of comics predating FLASH #105, and who had contacts with professionals, were as rare as Red Kryptonite. Fanzines proliferated from 1962 onwards, but this quartet was fandom's founding fathers and mother. Julius Schwartz paid tribute to Jerry Bails and Roy Thomas by naming a character after them in JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA. "Jerry Thomas" was the first Silver Age character named after fans.

Bails was a one-man dynamo who not only began Alter Ego with Roy but founded almost all of fandom's formative projects, including the Academy of Comic-Book Arts and Sciences. Can you imagine the excitement of receiving through the mail his many publications, with their heady brew of insider information and heartfelt opinion? Before me now is an early issue of The Comic Reader with Joe Kubert giving his reflections on why Hawkman didn't get his own comic after his first BRAVE AND THE BOLD try-out, *Continued on page 47*

After introducing the Flash, Schwartz again looked to the Golden Age heroes at DC for his next major project. In *Showcase* #22, he introduced a revival of one of the most memorable and novel characters of the '40's, the Green Lantern!

Again, the origin of the character was science fiction oriented, a Julie Schwartz trademark (the Flash had been created by a combination of lightning and chemicals). The Green Lantern obtained his powers via a benevolent group of space beings known as the Guardians of the Universe. Through them, he was given a ring and the power battery needed to charge it. The ring was activated by the wearer's mental concentration. Hal Jordan, the Earth's Green Lantern, was then assigned a certain sector of the universe to patrol and protect.

The artist for Green Lantern was a perfect choice. Gil Kane had been around DC since the early '50s where he had begun by illustrating the western strip, Johnny Thunder. Kane had an action style of illustrating similar to that of Jack Kirby, and his ability to illustrate machinery has yet to be matched. For a series with such a heavy emphasis on science fiction plots, no better artist could have been picked.

Like the Flash, the Green Lantern was an overwhelming success, and after three consecutive tryout issues in *Showcase*, he received his own series. (Actually his success seems to have been a forgone conclusion by DC as they had began running house ads in their comics for a Justice League of America book and the cover depicted the revived Green Lantern as a member of the team even before he was awarded his own series.)

As *Showcase* #4 was historically important, Brave and the Bold #28 (which came out in 1960) was the most eagerly anticipated comic of the period! No book printed during the early days of the Silver Age created more interest and excitement than did this issue, featuring the introduction of the Justice League of America!

Interestingly enough, the *Brave and the Bold* comic had begun in an adventure format, featuring such characters as the Viking Prince, the Silent Knight and Robin Hood. This anthology/adventure format lasted for 24 issues. With issue #25, DC changed the format to their second tryout magazine. This was evidence indeed that the comic book industry was again booming!

By the time the *Brave and the Bold* issue featuring the first appearance of the JLA hit the stands, there was already a fledgling of fandom. Many fan magazines of the day that were primarily related to science fiction had began running comic book related articles. Comic book letter columns enabled fans across the country to discuss the pros and cons of specific stories, read editor feedback directly, and to make contact with other fans and collectors... many for the first time.

It soon became obvious that many fans of the earlier Golden Age were also being caught up in the revivals of their

Continued on page 45

old heroes. The title these older comic book fans recalled most fondly was *All Star Comics* featuring the Justice Society of America.

The Justice Society was a team featuring the more popular DC heroes of the time. In one adventure together, such characters as Green Lantern, Flash, Wonder Woman, Dr. Fate, the Spectre, Hawkman, and the Atom (among others) appeared as members of the elite group. Recalling this brilliant concept (and with the revival of the Flash and The Green Lantern already accomplished) editor Schwartz decided the time was right to bring back this type of book.

Shortly after the Green Lantern's third and last appearance in *Showcase* (#24), house ads began to appear in DC comics for *Brave and the Bold* #28. The cover depicted the Justice League of America and proclaimed in the ad copy, "Just imagine, the mightiest heroes of our time have banded together as the Justice League of America to stamp out evil wherever and whenever it appears!"

Fans, collectors, and everyday readers of the time were elated! The cover was exciting and colorful, and featured a five-pronged giant starfish with a single huge eye, battling five of DC's top heroes! Three of the five costumed heroes pictured have already been discussed: Flash, Green Lantern and J'onn J'onzz. The other two charter members of the JLA featured on that first historic cover appearance were Wonder Woman and Aquaman, both of whom had been around in one DC magazine or another since the early 1940s. These five would make up the active membership for the JLA's first six stories.

While these five members would form the core team for the early JLA issues, there were two other DC heroes that were charter members of the team... Superman and Batman. They would appear only in minor roles until later in the magazine's run. It is generally felt by collectors and fans that the best Justice League stories were those that relegated these two characters to "supporting status" and allowed less seen characters at DC to take the limelight.

The writer for the first JLA story was the same one that handled the Justice Society stories of the '40s–Gardner F. Fox. His affinity for the book was evident... and some of his very best Silver Age work would be done on the JLA series.

Fox set the basic format for the JLA stories right from the start by having the team come together at the beginning of the story, discuss the threat or mystery, hand out specific assignments to members, break up singly or in pairs, handle the assigned task, and meet as a team at story's end to solve the final details as a unit.

Most JLA menaces turned out to be either space aliens or some warped super-genius. In his stories, Fox would deal very little with character development or feuding team members as would later become so popular at Marvel. His stories would be heavy on plot and action and deal primarily with the clash or hero and villain powers.

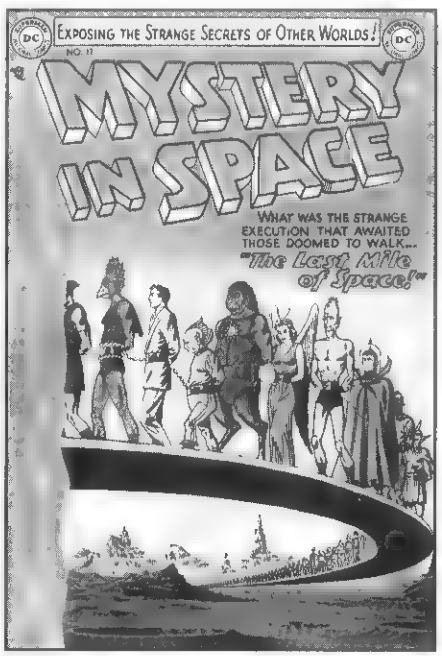
Fox would rarely continue a story to the next issue, allowing readers the satisfaction of reading the complete plot in one issue. While comic writers today might find that feat nearly an impossibility, Gardner F. Fox did it often and with results.

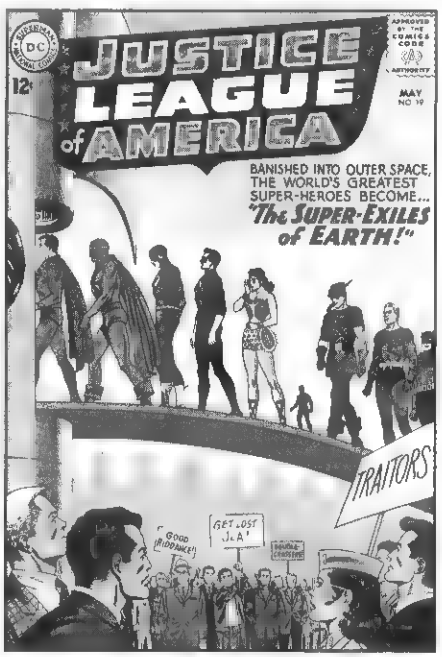
It should be mentioned that the team would have a mascot (of sorts...) introduced in their first appearance. Based on a teen heart throb of the time (Ed "Kookie" Byrnes) the teenager, "Snapper" Carr, was so nicknamed because of his continual habit of snapping his fingers, "beatnik style." The reason for his inclusion was for teen identification in the hope of increasing sales. Respectfully, most fans are thankful that his contribution to the JLA was abbreviated.

While the covers would remain outstanding and the writing excellent, the art on the series continued to be a point of controversy among fans. The artist handed the undoubtedly, difficult job of drawing all those characters with all those different styles was Mike Sekowsky. (It has been rumored that because of the necessity of illustrating stories with so many different costumed characters, most artists did not want this major chore.)

Sekowsky pencilled the first appearance of the JLA in *Brave and the Bold* #28 and would be the regular artist when the JLA got their own magazine. Bernard Sachs would ink Sekowsky's pencils with relative finesse. Murphy Anderson would ink most of the covers by Sekowsky, and actually did many entirely on his own. Sekowsky's fan critiques often still argue that his "two

Mystery In Space #17 (Dec '53/Jan '54) features one of the great cover concepts on any DC sci-fi book. It was so good in fact that it was the obvious inspiration for the cover of JLA #17 (May 1963), published a decade later.


EXPOSING THE STRANGE SECRETS OF OTHER WORLDS!
MYSTERY IN SPACE
WHAT WAS THE STRANGE EXECUTION THAT AWAITED THOSE DOOMED TO WALK...
"The Last Mile of Space!"


JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA
BANISHED INTO OUTER SPACE, THE WORLD'S GREATEST SUPER-HEROES BECOME...
"The SUPER-EXILES of EARTH!"
TRAITORS
GET LOST JLA!

dimensional," "anatomically avant garde" style was not appropriate for superheros. Others look back on his style as quintissential JLA!

The fans who complained about Sekowsky's style wanted and expected their heroes in the JLA to look just like they did in their regular features. For some reason, DC never caught on to (or chose to ignore) this crucial concept. In spite of this controversy, JLA became one of DC's most popular selling books, proving the concept was more important than artistic sentiment.

The membership meld of the JLA was near perfect. While the team was indeed powerful, it was possible to defeat. J'onn J'onzz, of course, was the team's most powerful active member, and for the first ten issues or so, Superman would be mainly a supporting character. However, fire could weaken and destroy J'onn J'onzz and fire was much more common than kryptonite!

The cover of JLA #22 (Sep 1963) demonstrates yet another "cagey utilization" of repeated cover ideas. This one originally appeared on Mystery In Space #18 (Feb/Mar 1954).

Of the other four active members, Green Lantern was an ordinary man armed with his extraordinary, thought-induced power ring, useless against anything yellow. The Flash had super speed. Aquaman could live under water, communicate with the undersea creatures, and Wonder Woman, though powerful, was not indestructable. So the initial five active members, while formidable opponents, could be defeated by a writer's imagination.

The vulnerability of the original group allowed the early issues to be fun and rather unpredictable. It also made it relatively easy for writer Fox to come up with villains that could actually present an effective challenge to the team.

JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA
ONLY BY USING THE COMBINED MIGHT OF OUR POWER RINGS CAN WE HOPE TO FREE OUR FELLOW MEMBERS TRAPPED IN THOSE SPACE PRISONS
A SENSATIONAL SUPER-STAR SPECTACULAR FEATURING THE JUSTICE LEAGUE and JUSTICE SOCIETY
EARTH-TWO!

The second installment of the JLA in *Brave and the Bold* #29 served up more of the same, including a great cover and interesting story. However, this issue did prove the people connected to the Justice League had done their homework on the Golden Age Justice Society, as the cover for this issue was directly inspired by *All Star* #43.

The covers were all that was similar, however, because the story in *Brave and the Bold* #29 dealt with a criminal from Earth's future, the Weapon's Master! *All Star* #43, on the other hand, sent the Justice Society into a "Dimension Of Gold!"

Brave and the Bold #30 featured the outstanding cover of the three *Brave and Bold* tryout stories, depicting one of the best villains (Amazo) the team would face in its long career. Amazo was an android created by a mad genius named Professor Ivo. Ivo proceeded to capture the members of the JLA and transferred their powers to his android. The JLA had to then battle a single being armed with all their combined powers. The story was far and away the best of Fox's first three JLA tryout stories... and some feel the first truly classic Silver Age JLA epic.

The three appearances of the JLA in *Brave and the Bold* were instant hits at the newsstands and warranted a near immediate Justice League series in their own magazine. The first issue of *JLA* appeared in late 1960 and featured the same active membership as had been featured in the three *Brave and the Bold* issues. The first issue sported a nice Anderson cover and the story was "sci fi" villain á la Fox.

Issue #2 should be noted, as once again the Golden Age Justice Society shed its influence. This time the covers were not similar, but the stories were. In *JLA* #2 the Justice League adventure was entitled "Secret of the Sinister Sorcerers" and dealt with the JLA entering a dimension of magic to solve a perplexing problem. (i.e., science no longer working on Earth) Fox admitted to being inspired for this story by a similar one he had written for *All Star* #39. "Invasion From Fairyland!" was an offbeat story and contains many concepts comparable to those in *Brave and the Bold* #30.

While issue #3 is notable for its Kanjar Ro epic and its exceptional black cover, *JLA* #4 stands as one of the few genuine classic Silver Age comic books. The cover was illustrated by Murphy Anderson and is often proposed as the best of the first seven. Second, it featured the first new member to be inducted into the roll call of the JLA.

The Green Arrow had been a perennial favorite at DC for many years. Back in the mid '40s, he had been the cover feature on one of their "Big Eight" anthology books, *More Fun Comics*. From there, he moved on to back-up features in *Adventure Comics* and *World's Finest Comics*. Also in the '40s he had been a member of a team called the "Laws Legionnaires" (also

known as the "7 Soldiers of Victory") appearing in *Leading Comics*. This group, illustrated by such top line artists as George Papp and Jack Kirby, was sort of a "second string" Justice Society.

Green Arrow's induction into the JLA did little to upset the "required vulnerability" needed for effective plot lines, and in that light Green Arrow was the perfect choice! Because issue #4 added the first new member to the JLA, it remains historically important in the JLA saga and is a genuine classic Silver Age book.

The only noteworthy item in issue #5 with its story "When Gravity Went Wild" was the fact that this is the first cover to depict Superman and Batman. While they were not prominent on the cover or in the story, it did forebode things to come. Issue #6 "The Wheel Of Misfortune" once again featured a cover reflecting an idea previously suggested by an *All Star* cover. On the cover of issue #6 the JLA heroes are shown tied to a wheel of fortune or "misfortune" in this case. On *All Star* #42 the Justice Society members are shown attached to a propeller device. Other than the cover, the stories had no similarities.

While issues #7 and 8 offered up average fare, #9 finally got around to telling the origin of the JLA. Except for the fact that it is the origin issue, the book was rather unexceptional.

Its famous cover shows the five original team members, under the influence of a sinister green meteorite, slowly turning into trees. Taken from the "space creature genre," the story shows the seven charter members being drawn together for the first time. After the adventure, Batman suggests they should form an ongoing "club" of sorts to be ready to combat such future menaces as needed. The heroes present agreed and the team was formed. Not outstanding, but interesting.

Issue #10 featured another distinctive cover by Anderson and was also the first half of the first two-part JLA adventure, with *JLA* #11 taking up where #10 left off. Interestingly, the two parts of the continued story can actually be read as one complete novella, as part one is really just a "prequel" to the events in part two.

Many fans consider issue #10 to be the issue that put the first cracks into the series' strong foundation. It marked the first time Superman and Batman began to take more active rolls in the title. Superman was just too powerful and putting him in a team which already had J'onn J'onzz just made the roll call predictable. And Batman? Well, many have suggested the true quality of his character only works as a "lone" figure, thus rendering him a less than perfect choice for a "team" effort. With the addition of these two as active members, the roster began to be rather crowded to fit into

Gambaccini *continued from page 36* Gardner Fox consulting his records to show that he originally created Dr. Fate as Dr. Droon, and Stan Lee informing fandom he had "a five-page filler named Dr. Strange" coming up; "nothing great, but perhaps we can make something of him."

This stuff was our lifeblood, and Julius Schwartz knew it. Although we were often strident in our expressions of opinion and not always representative of the general public, Julie found fandom to be the touchstone that let him know when he was on to a good thing.

Schwartz was the man who revived the super-hero as the leading type of comics publication. The indispensable Photo-Journal to Comic Books by Ernst and Mary Gerber contains a graph of comic book market shares by genre from 1938 to 1970. It shows that super-heroes, so strong during the Golden Age of the late thirties to mid-forties, accounted for less than 10% of the titles published during the fifties. Only in the early sixties did the share start to increase and then, of course, the gain was dramatic.

Superman, Batman, and Wonder Woman were the great survivors, the only Golden Age super-hero characters to retain their books during the fifties. As has been retold in previous editions in the DC reprint series, Flash was revived under Julius Schwartz's direction in SHOWCASE #4 in 1956, getting his own book in 1959 after one further SHOWCASE appearance in 1957 and two more trials in 1958. For a super-speedster, there was certainly no rush, but then there was no competition. Indeed, fellow SHOWCASE stars Lois Lane and Jack Kirby's Challengers of the Unknown, regular humans all, won their own titles before Flash did. Even when Barry Allen got his own book, dated February-March 1959, it was to be another seven months before the next revival, Green Lantern, received his first SHOWCASE try-out.

Julius Schwartz had his first BRAVE AND THE BOLD series with issues #28 through #30 (March, May and July 1960). He chose to revive the Justice Society of America, the group from ALL STAR COMICS who had been the exemplar of the super-hero team during the Golden Age. As Julie related in THE AMAZING WORLD OF DC COMICS #14 (1977), "To me, 'Society' meant something you found on Park Avenue. I felt that 'League' was a stronger word, one that the readers could identify with because of baseball leagues."

There weren't many players Schwartz could bring in to bat. Flash and Wonder Woman surely qualified, having their own books. The membership of Green Lantern was a tip-off that this character, who had finished his SHOWCASE run the month before, was likely to win his own book. J'onn J'onzz had been carrying his six pages a month in DETECTIVE for five years, so he qualified, and AQUAMAN was still swimming in Superboy's wash in ADVENTURE, so he was in.

Superman and Batman (in 1960 nobody would have dared list them the other way around) were also full members, but were not featured on the BRAVE AND THE BOLD covers, nor on the early issues of JLA. As Schwartz explained in the first JLA Mail Room in BRAVE AND THE BOLD #30, "these two popular heroes appear in so many other DC magazines that we thought it would be more appropriate to play up the other members." Julie later confirmed in the special JLA issue of AMAZING WORLD OF DC COMICS that the "we" in that passage included "Mort Weisinger, who was the editor of the Superman magazines, and Jack Schiff, who was the editor of the Batman magazines." They feared "the heroes might become overused and it would take away from sales on their books."

Thus the WORLD'S FINEST pair were listed on the JLA roll call, but had distinctly minor parts to play in the adventures. In the first BRAVE AND THE BOLD adventure, "Starro the Conqueror," Superman and Batman *Continued on page 48*

Gambaccini *continued from page 47* both hear the JLA emergency signal, but the Man of Steel is too busy destroying an earth-threatening meteor shower to respond, and the Caped Crusader is engaged closing in on two unnamed "archenemies who have joined forces to loot Gotham City."

The best way to get over the problem appeared in B & B #30. The two heroes go out to do their share of the work and simply don't come back. "We better signal Superman and Batman that the threat is over," Flash remembers to say on the last page. Nowadays Weisinger and Schiff's fear of reduced sales seems quaint as major heroes manage to turn up in a new issue just about every week. The response to B & B #28 through #30 was phenomenal. The JLA only had to wait two months before getting its own book. The pace of super-hero revivals quickened. DC brought back Atom and Hawkman successfully, and it wasn't the only company to resuscitate its Golden Age stars. Martin Goodman, head of the Marvel group, noted the success of the JLA and suggested to editor Stan Lee that a super-hero team book might reverse the company's flagging fortunes. Reviving the Human Torch and inventing three new characters, Lee and artist Jack Kirby created the Fantastic Four, saving the company and beginning an entire line of heroes that survive to the present day. It is an ironic thought that without Julius Schwartz there would probably be no Marvel Comics.

Gardner Fox was the obvious choice to write JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA, as he had worked on the Justice Society. He used his previous format of bringing team members together in the opening and closing chapters and sending them off on individual or dual adventures in the middle of the book. Mike Sekowsky, previously best known for his efforts on science-fiction titles was the pencil artist. Bernard Sachs inked him.

The debate on whether Sekowsky was the right person for the job did not even end with his death, but continues to this day. He had a highly personal sense of anatomy. I wince whenever I see Snapper Carr looking middle-aged and portly in the first panel of page 22 of "Starro the Conqueror," but I'm touched by the wizened old folk in the second panel of page 9 of B & B #30, "Case of the Stolen SuperPowers." Mike's real triumph was in giving JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA an identifiable look, which helped give the book its unique nature. Issues after he left are generally less distinctive and less memorable, and there may be a cause-and-effect relationship.

JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA meant more to real fans than any other Silver Age book. As befits its status as the first team book and the first immediate hit of the period, its health and quality were of first priority to fans. The 1963 Alley Awards even included a write-in category, Artist Preferred on the Justice League of America. (For the record, Murphy Anderson, the cover artist on the first four issues of the actual JLA book and Sekowsky's inker on the B & B covers, was the narrow winner.)

Not only did we furiously debate over who should draw the JLA, we speculated over who should be in it. Looking back it seems simple: "Our intent was to use all of DC's super-heroes running at the time," Schwartz recalled. "A hero did not become a full-fledged member of the group until he appeared in his own series." Letter columns of the time are full of discussion over who should and who should not be in the JLA, as if it were as important as which countries should or should not be in NATO or the EEC. But didn't our parents know? This wasn't real life, this was more important!

It was thus a genuine big deal when Green Arrow joined the group in JLA #4. All he had to do was save the lives of everyone except Superman and Batman (who were once again conveniently not in the room) by breaking open a gigantic diamond within which our famous five were imprisoned. The only way to do the standard 25-page comic book. As the membership began to grow, the book began to lose much of its unique personality.

The JLA would have to do a guest appearance in another magazine to finally get the respect art-wise they were due.

At the time of issue #11 of their own magazine, over in *Mystery In Space* #75, the JLA joined Adam Strange in his book-length adventure "The Planet That Came To A Standstill." The villain of the story was JLA foe Kanjar Ro, who had appeared in *JLA* #3.

The art team on Adam Strange at the time was, arguably, done by the best duo of the Silver Age; Carmine Infantino on pencils and Murphy Anderson on inks. For this very special issue, they pulled out all the stops. The beautiful art done on the *JLA* in the last chapter of this book certainly left fans of the team longing for more of the same. No JLA collection would be complete without *Mystery In Space* #75.

*JLA*s #12 and 13 fall into the "pretty much average issue" category and by this point the JLA began operating more in teams of two or three to accommodate the growing active membership. Fighting a menace alone as some of the members did in earlier issues was now over. While Fox would still turn out some classic stories for the series before it would collapse into confusion and disarray, the book was just not as much fun as it had been.

Before looking at issue #14, time must be taken to look at what had been going on in other areas of the DC universe. Two other Golden Age heroes had been given a new lease of life via DC's two "tryout" titles–the Hawkman in *Brave and the Bold* #34, 35, and 36; the Atom in *Showcase* #34, 35 and 36 (coincidence?).

Both characters were under the editorial guidance of (who else?) Julius Schwartz. For the first time, one of editor Schwartz's revised heroes failed to "fly" as the Hawkman (though well written by Gardner F. Fox and superbly illustrated by Joe Kubert who had illustrated the strip in the '40s) was unsuccessful in attracting buyer support on tryout issues to warrant a series. Hope was not lost, though, as Hawkman would be given a second three-issue tryout in *Brave and the Bold* #42, 43 and 44. From there, he would win his own series. As with the other revived Schwartz heroes, the Hawkman strip was science fiction oriented. In this case, the Hawkman (along with his wife Shierra) were visitors from another planet come to Earth to study our crime solving techniques.

With all its fine points, good writing, fantastic art, and the most interesting costume of all the Silver Age heroes, it remains a mystery why Hawkman didn't have instant success.

Over at *Showcase*, the Atom issues did prove successful. The

Atom was really a combination of two Golden Age heroes. In name only he was a revival of the former character appearing in DC's *All American Comics* (as well as a member of the Justice Society in *All Star Comics*) and, because of his size-reducing ability, he was an updated edition of the popular Quality Comics hero, Doll Man. As to be expected with a Schwartz hero, the origin was again science fiction in theme.

The Atom gained his powers by being exposed to rays from a meteorite chunk thrown from a white dwarf star. By using a control on the belt of his uniform, the Atom could release these rays to instantly reduce in size from a normal adult to one microscopic in size (though he would normally stop at a few inches in height). Important was the fact that when reduced in size, he retained the strength of a full grown man.The sales on the "Mighty Mite's" three tryout issues were good enough to win him his own series before Hawkman, the result of which led to his becoming a member of the JLA before the "winged wonder!"

As an aside, it should be noted at this point just how important DC's roll was in creating a new age of interest in the comic book that is still flourishing today! At the time period now being discussed, DC had already successfully introduced such popular characters as the Flash, the Green Lantern, the Challengers of the Unknown, the Justice League of America, Cave Carson, the Suicide Squad, the Atom, and to some extent, the Hawkman. Marvel, to this date, had yet to introduce their first successful Silver Age hero!

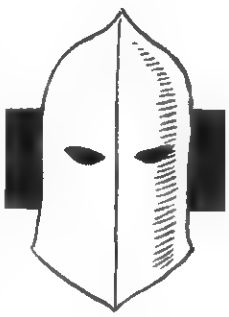
JLA #14, "Menace of the Atom Bomb," served as a vehicle to induct the Atom into the team's roll call. The Atom had no special powers other than size reduction, so he did little to make the JLA more powerful, but he did add variety. His small size in proportion to the other heroes seemed to be a problem for both illustrator and writer alike. It was a real problem in group scenes and team-up chapters, and it sure made for some ingenious and unusual covers.

With the roster of the active JLA members now at nine, things were beginning to get out of hand, with both the art and the story. Throw in a couple of villains or so and things really got messy. There were just too many characters for a 25-page comic book. Fans still speculate today as to why Schwartz did not follow the lead set by *All Star Comics*, which kept the membership at a manageable level by dropping some members when new ones were added. That philosophy had kept All Star fresh and exciting for over ten years.

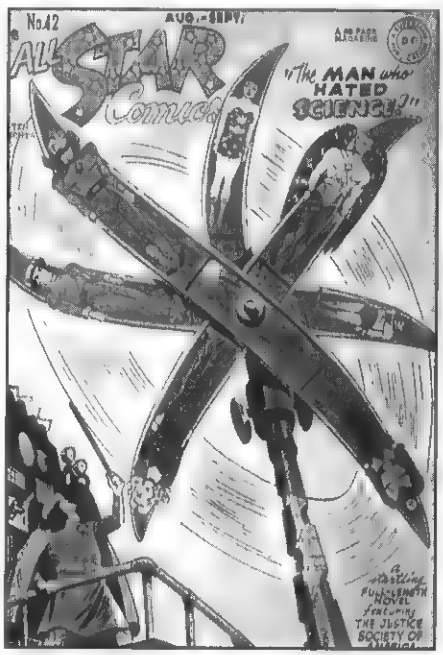
Issue #s 15 through 20 dealt primarily with alien menaces, but issues #21 and 22 would wake fans up with one of the most memorable stories in Silver Age history!

To put these two issues in the proper perspective, it is important to remember *Flash* #123, one of the classic stories of the early Silver Age. The story, "Flash of Two Worlds," written by Gardner F. Fox had the modern Flash, through super vibration, cross dimensions into a world called "Earth 2." This alternate world was similar in all aspects to our world except it was here that the heroes of DC's Golden Age resided. Earth One's Flash met his name-sake, the Golden Age Flash of Earth Two, and from there they shared the first of many adventures together. The re-introduction of the original Golden Age Flash marked the first reappearance in the Silver Age of a member of the Justice Society of America.

The story proved immensely popular with both new and older fans and a second team-up of the two heroes appeared in *Flash* #129. In this issue, mention was made of the original Justice Society. (NOTE: While *Flash* #129 was the first official reintroduction of the Justice Society into the modern DC universe, it was not the team's first appearance in one of the Schwartz revival books. A historical reference to the Justice Society had appeared in the centerfold of *Showcase* #34 featuring the Atom. A reproduction drawn from *All Star* #3's cover was shown and the members were listed along with their powers.) This teaser got immediate response from fans who demanded to actually see the group in action once more... they got it!!! In the next team-up of the two speedsters in *Flash* #137 ("Vengeance of the Immortal Villain"), the Justice Society was brought out of retirement to help the two Flashes do battle with Golden Age villain Vandal Savage.



It was a fortunate turn of events for readers everywhere when the cover idea on All Star #42 (Aug/Sep 1948) was reworked for the cover of JLA #6 (Sep 1962).



Fans still wanted more of this very colorful group and just could'nt seem to get enough. Even the writers and artists at DC were caught up in the excitement of the appearance of the JSA.

The miraculous happened in *JLA* #21; a team-up of the Justice League and the Justice Society!

The book today is justifiably one of the most sought after DC comics of the Silver Age. The cover pencilled by Mike Sekowsky and inked (with inspiration) by Anderson, ranks as one of the very best Silver Age covers ever and only one other *JLA* cover would rival it in impact. The cover shows the JLA members in a séance-like pose around a table with the Justice Society appearing in a cloud of smoke above their heads. It is doubtful any other single issue of the JLA in their own series (excluding the *Brave and the Bold* tryout issues) ever created as much excitement as did this single issue.

Although the pose is not an obvious swipe, the similarity of the viewer's angle and the robot theme has lead most comic book historians to conclude that the cover of Brave & Bold #29 is based on All Star #42.

Fox was inspired in his writing of the story "Crisis On Earth I." The Justice Society members he chose to bring back in their first adventure since *All Star* were: the Flash, Hawkman, Dr. Fate, Black Canary, Hourman, the Atom, and the Green Lantern. The classic tale carried over into issue #22 in the story "Crisis on Earth II." These two issues of the *JLA* stand near the top of any Silver Age collector's list of favorites and are bright spots in any comic collection.

Only one other *JLA* book in their own series can top or equal these two exciting issues. The initial appearance of the JLA/JSA team-up proved so popular that it would become an annual affair. The members participating on both teams would vary from annual outing to annual outing. Not much above average would happen in the series until the next pairing of the two groups in issue #29 and #30.

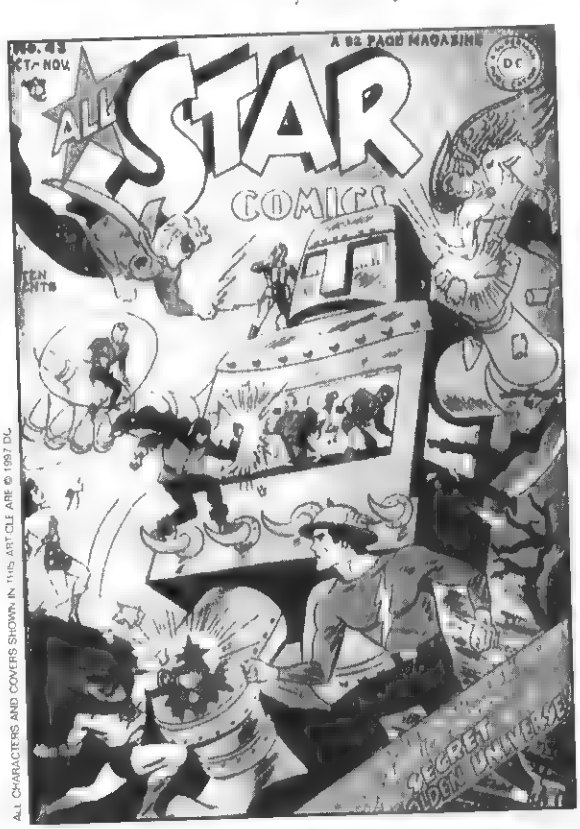
While the stories were adequate and there were some nice covers, nothing seemed to quite reach the peak set by the first *JSA* issues. Except for the outstanding cover on #29, the second annual team-up issues were a bit of a letdown from issue #21 and 22, a natural consequence of the anticipation for those two issues.

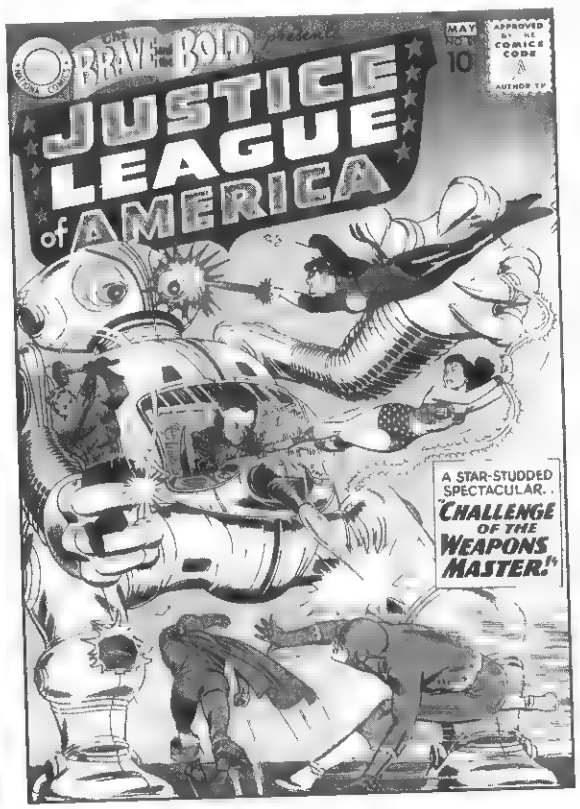
The cover for issue #29, as mentioned above, was another outstanding job from the Sekowsky/Anderson team and was also inspired by a previous *All Star* issue (#8, and this time the cover was an almost direct copy). The *All Star* cover has the Justice Society members standing around a crystal ball in which we see two heroes (Starman and Dr. Midnight) who are to be inducted as new members in that issue. On *JLA* #29 we see the JSA standing over a crystal ball in which the members of the JLA appear.

Regrettably, in this issue another alternate Earth is added to the DC universe; Earth III. The two issues entitled "Crisis on Earth III" and "The Most Dangerous Earth Of All" further crowded an already overflowing comics universe.

Earth III had their own costumed counterparts to Earth I and Earth II (in this case things were in reverse of the other two Earths as costumed "Heroes" of Earth III were all criminals). The two issues (*JLA* #29 and #30) were so overcrowded it began to look like a Mack Sennett Keystone Kops comedy! It was a classic case of "too much of a good thing".

JLA #31 introduced yet another new member into its roster. The Hawkman had been given a second tryout in *Brave and the Bold* and had finally won his own series. It was now time to award him full membership to the team. With his winged costume he was the League's most visual member, but the timing of his entry was not the most opportune in that the JLA was already overcrowded. This allowed the character of Hawkman to benefit little from being added





ALL CHARACTERS AND COVERS SHOWN IN THIS ART CLE ARE © 1997 DC

to the lineup. His addition, of course, just further log-jammed the already crowded book as his entry brought the active membership to ten.

It became virtually impossible to include the entire membership in one story. Members were left out of some issues and put into others, making it difficult to identify who was where, when and why!!! Hawkman's addition did not seem to meet with the excitement of the inductions of the Green Arrow and the Atom. It appeared that fans had begun to take a bit of a "ho-hum" attitude regarding the continual addition of new members.

Although the "newness" and thrill of the series seemed to be wearing thin, there were still a few bright rays of light that would crack through before the looming dark days of the book would fully take over. Two of these "rays of light" were issue #36 and 41. Back in the '40s the original Justice Society had dealt with social issues in a few of their adventures. In #36 the JLA had their first "social issue" adventure.

The story, "Case of the Disabled Justice League," has a villain ("Brain Storm") afflicting members of the JLA with handicaps similar to those of some children they had visited earlier in a hospital. The League then had to do battle against their enemy while afflicted with these handicaps and in so doing see what it was like to be faced with such afflictions. (NOTE: The JSA in *All Star* #27 also dealt with the issue of handicapped children.)

In issue #41 a villain by the name of The Key in an adventure entitled "The Key, Master Of The World" uses the members' consciences to influence them to break up the team. This story was also similar in context to two stories Fox had done in *All Star* #s 22 and 24 in which he had dealt with the importance of conscience in mankind. Though issue #36 and 41 are worthy of more than just passing attention in the context of the *JLA* series, it would be in issue #57 that Gardner Fox would really assert himself and do one of the best stories of the Silver Age (and possibly the single best JLA story?). Since issue #30, and with the exceptions of issue #36 and 41, not much out of the ordinary occurred until that 57th issue.

The series was on a downhill slide that had (or would) include the pun-filled issues so influenced by the "camp" Batman T.V. show, reprints (the bane of all serious readers at the time), silly guest stars, more reprints, silly covers, so-so stories, even more reprints, and a continually changing active membership that left readers confused as to who was in the JLA. For all these reasons, issue #s 36, 41, and 57 remain as outstanding examples of the series.

The cover to *Justice League* #57 stands as one of the very best done on any Silver Age comic book by any publisher. It was one of the truly classic covers of the Silver Age, or any age, for that matter. Pencilled by Carmine Infantino and inked by Sid Greene, it depicts the Green Arrow, Flash, and Hawkman standing behind three youths of differing nationalities holding hands in front of a United Nation's symbol. Above all their heads, carved in a granite-like stone, is the story title, "Man Thy Name Is Brother." The background is black, effecting a stunning, vivid and colorful piece of artwork!

The story, as told by the three cover heroes to Snapper Carr, teaches that men are truly brothers regardless of race, creed, or color. The story unravels as each of the stars carry Snapper to different parts of the world to bring their points home. Even Mike Sekowsky seemed inspired in his depiction of the story as was the inking by Sid Greene. Of all the JLA books, this stands as one of the finest examples of what could have been. If only one book could be labeled "classic" in the JLA series, the authors feel this would most likely be the one. Sad to say, the series would wander from this point into a mire of non-direction.

By the time Fox would write his last JLA adventure in issue #65, it had become evident he had lost some enthusiasm (and why not, he had been writing for decades). Writers would come and go, each with their own ideas as to what the characters would be like, adding and dropping characters in what seemed like arbitrary comic book madness! The series had lost its special distinction. Grown members would squabble and fuss like immature teens in a half-hearted attempt to "copy" Marvel. "Colorful" language would spout from the mouths of drooping and desperate heroic figures.

Characters would be killed off, continuity would become a thing of the past, and art would suffer terribly. Membership would grow to the size of a small army and stories would run on for untold issues. Before its last truly inglorious days, the title would enjoy a few brighter moments, like some nice covers by Neal Adams and Gil Kane, and some really excellent interior art by the talented George Perez. Still, it seemed the book had so lost its personality that even a few shining exceptions could not have saved it.

The *JLA* remains among the most controversial of all the Silver Age, Julius Schwartz-edited, DC titles. That distinction alone will keep the *Justice League of America* at the forefront of collector demand and interest for years to come. To gain insight into the title's on-going popularity, one need only look at the current collector's market to see the upwardly escalating demand for, and value of, *JLA* back issues.

While the *JLA* was not, perhaps, the artistic perfection "fans" wanted in its later issues, it was intriguing enough to keep readers coming back to the newsstand for over 20 years! Even today, *JLA* spin off titles continue to be successful in spite of the demise of the original title with the April, 1987, issue. Consider the fact that the "second series" began in May, 1987, without missing even a single month of publication! You see, the fans just simply love the concept, rather like literary and visual neapolitan ice cream.

Remember how you felt the first time you saw all those heroes on the same cover???? Yep, (sigh) so do I.... ■

This article was originally published in Overstreet's Comic Book Price Guide *#20 (1990) and is reprinted here (with slight revisions) by permission.*

Banne
In Ca

As a child during the war years, my dad, along with thousands of other Canadian readers, was suddenly and without warning deprived of his beloved American comic books.

Unbeknownst to them, the Canadian Government (faced with a growing trade deficit with the U.S.) passed the "War Exchange Conservation Act" on December 6, 1940. The idea was to preserve Canada's foreign exchange credits and conserve American dollars by restricting the importation of non-essential goods. Unfortunately, for Canadian kids, among the items banned were U.S. fictional periodicals and comic books were among the items that were banned.

ned Canada

My father, a comic book lover from the beginning, told me... "All of a sudden you just couldn't find them anywhere!"

by Francis Litzinger

Canada with its strong ties to the British Empire, had entered the Second World War in September of 1939 and was increasingly mobilizing her economy to support these efforts, both at home and abroad.

The poor kids never knew what hit them. Canadian newsstands must have looked awfully bare to a comic book lover who had become accustomed to the full colored adventures of Superman or The Human Torch.

Canadian winters can be brutal enough, but with a war raging on and no comic books, the winter of 1941 must have appeared even bleaker.

Let's print 'em up here!

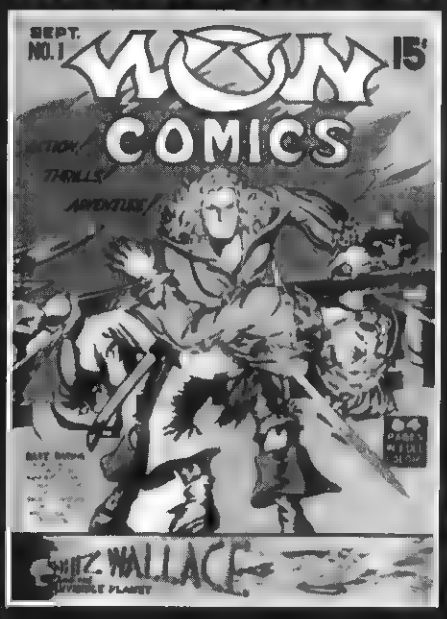
Canadian publishers were not long in realizing they could make a lot of money from this ban. Four different publishers were to take advantage of the American comic book void. Major Mat Publishing in Vancouver and three Toronto publishers Anglo-American, Hillborough Studios and Bell Features and Publishing.

The first two Canadian comic books were Anglo American's *Robin Hood and Company* and Maple Leaf's *Better Comics*, both making their debut in March 1941. *Robin Hood* was published in black and white as were most Canadian comic books during this period. *Robin Hood* was a printed in tabloid format and featured reprints of the "Robin Hood" newspaper strip. *Better Comics* was one of the few published in color and featured original material in standard comic book format. *Better Comics* also introduced the first Canadian superhero Iron Man, who essentially shared all the same characteristics of Superman and possessed no uniquely Canadian traits.

The country's first distinct superhero didn't make her appearance until August 1941. Adrian Dingle (of Hillborough Studios) fashioned his heroine, Nelvana of the Northern Lights, after old Norse myths. Nelvana possessed the power of flight and could travel at the speed of light along a ray of the Aurora Borealis.

Dingle brought to his artwork a sophistication that most of his contemporaries lacked. Unfortunately this wasn't enough to stop him from having to abandon his Hillsborough studios

Wow Comics #1 featuring "Dart Daring, dare-devil master swordsman" (and his fight with the bold Buccaneers of the Red Sea trade) and "Whiz Wallace and the Invisible Planet", a Canadian sci-fi strip a la Flash Gordan and Buck Rogers.



Special thanks to two invaluable and in-depth books on this subject: Guardians of the North *and* The Great Canadian Comic Books.

Second Time Around

There's an incredible number of great Golden Age reprints in JLA 52-Page Giants!

—By Shawn Hamilton

Highly sought after Bronze Age DC collectibles in their own right, JLA #95 (Dec 1971) and JLA #99 (Jun 1972) are relatively inexpensive and contain excellent reprints.

AND NOW IT'S TIME FOR... 'LET'S MAKE A COMIC DEAL!!'

"Tell us about our first contestant, Johnny."

"He's a long-time comic book collector and fanzine editor from Santa Rosa, California. Meet Pat Calhoun!"

"Welcome Pat. Johnny, tell us what's behind curtain number one!"

"A beautiful *Justice League of America* #94 (applause light) containing not only a Sandman story ("The Tarantula Strikes") by Gardner Fox and Bert Christman which was originally presented in *Adventure Comics* #40 (July 1939). It also has the first Starman story from *Adventure Comics* #61 ("Dr Doog and the Ultra Dynamo" by Jack Burnley, April 1941). A package worth $13,400 in NM Overstreet. Back to you Shawn."

"Thanks Johnny. Now Pat, you can keep your *JLA* #94 or trade it for what's behind curtain number two!... Johnny, tell us about it!."

"It's a *Justice League of America* #95! You'll be the envy of your neighbors, driving around town with a comic that reprints the origin and first appearance of Dr. Mid-Nite by Charles Reizenstein and Stan Aschmeier from *All-American Comics* #25 (April 1941) and the origin of Dr. Fate by Gardner Fox and Hal Sherman from *More Fun Comics* #67 (May 1941). A prize package worth $13,300 (NM *Overstreet*)."

"Alright Pat, now before you decide, let's see what the lovely Vanna has in box number one!"

"Shawn, it's a brand new *Justice League* #96, that's right, no home is complete without this beauty. Just think of the ease of housework with a comic that reprints the origin and first appearance of Hourman by Ken Fitch and Bernard Baily from *Adventure Comics* #48 (March 1940) and a Wildcat story by the incomparable Bob Kanigher and Bernie Krigstein called "The Monkey's Circle" from *Sensation Comics* #84 (December 1948). Retail value over $17,000 (NM *Overstreet*). Back to you Shawn."

"Thanks Vanna. Now Pat, as a big winner you get a chance at our special showcase! Johnny, tell them what's in the showcase!"

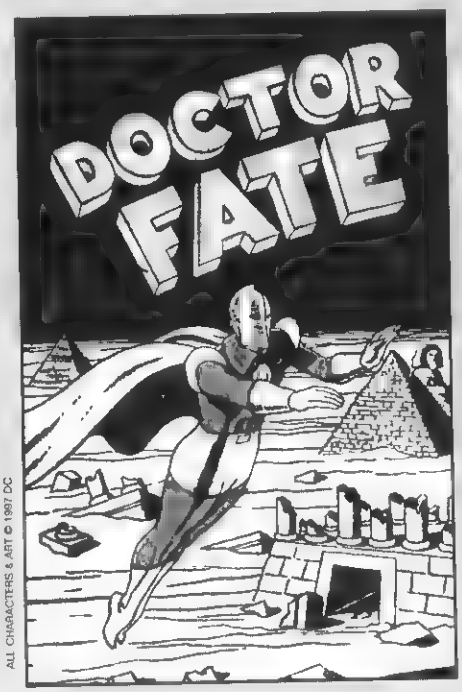
"Shawn, it's a *Justice League* #98 featuring Sargon The Sorcerer in 'The Woman Who Wanted The World' by John Broome and Paul Reinman from *Sensation Comics* #70 (October 1947) and Starman in 'The Three Comets' by Joe Samachson and Jack Burnley from *Adventure Comics* #92 (June/July 1944). And as an extra bonus, a *Justice League of America* #99 with optional Sandman story ('The Pawn Broker' by Creig Flessel from *Adventure Comics* #51 (June 1940) and the Atom story by Bob Kanigher, Carmine Infantino, and Frank Giacoia form *Flash Comics* #98 (August 1948) – California emissions, tax and license excluded."

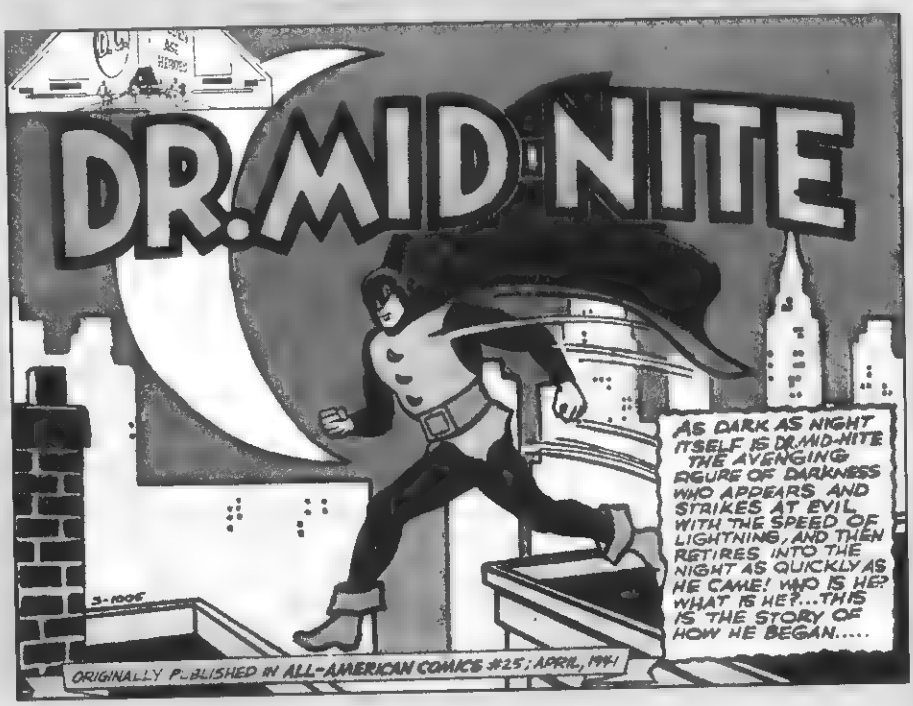
"Now Pat, can you tell me the retail value of your showcase, without going over?"

"Shawn... how about $1,115 (NM *Overstreet)*."

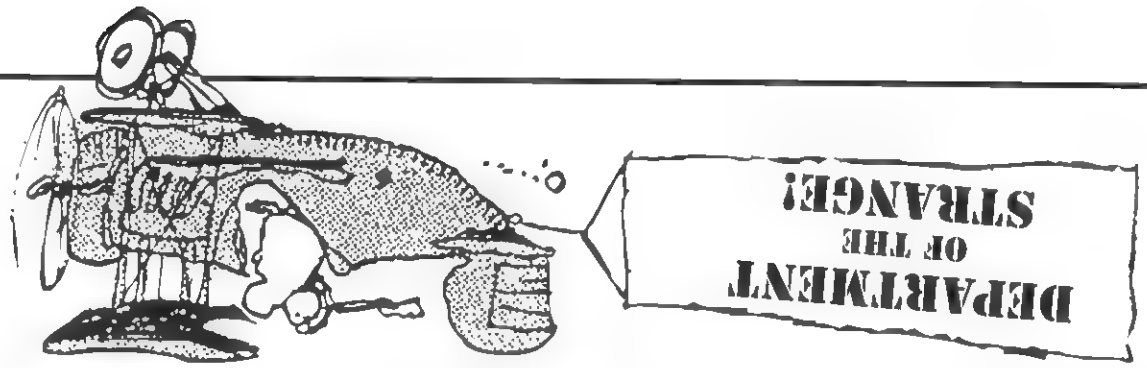
"That's right Pat!!! You are our grand prize winner! Your total cash and prizes total over $44,850 (NM *Overstreet*)... and for just $86 bucks (NM *Overstreet*).

"Thanks to Jon Ingersoll's DC reprint index, 1996 *Overstreet Price Guide*, and all our viewers at home! See you next time on 2nd Time Around! Goodnight everybody." ■

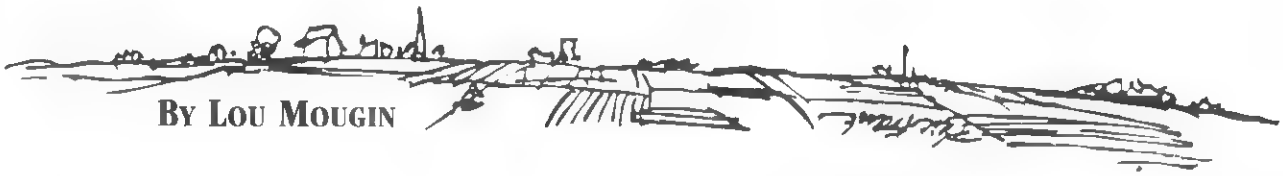



DR. MID-NITE
AS DARK AS NIGHT ITSELF IS DR.MID-NITE THE AVENGING FIGURE OF DARKNESS WHO APPEARS AND STRIKES AT EVIL WITH THE SPEED OF LIGHTNING, AND THEN RETIRES INTO THE NIGHT AS QUICKLY AS HE CAME! WHO IS HE? WHAT IS HE?...THIS IS THE STORY OF HOW HE BEGAN.....
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN ALL-AMERICAN COMICS #25; APRIL, 1941

ALL CHARACTERS & ART © 1997 DC



SEVEN SOLDIERS OF VICTORY!



BY LOU MOUGIN

The Seven Soldiers stories have been unfairly bumrapped as luke-warm copies of the Justice Society... usually by JSA fans who should know better.

When you've got a hit super-hero team book featuring all the front-line heroes in your comics company, and you want to do another one, what do you do? You go on a hero hunt and scrounge up all the ones you missed the first time.

This was DC's position in 1941 after getting a major hit out of the Justice Society of America in *All-Star Comics*. But the JSA, which had been operating for over a year when National decided to repeat themselves, already had the major-league talent. Flash, Green Lantern, Wonder Woman, Atom, Hourman, Spectre, Dr. Fate, Wildcat, Mr. Terrific, Johnny Thunder, the Black Canary, and those seldom-appearing also-rans, Superman and Batman. After that, who was left?

The Green Arrow, Speedy, the Vigilante, the Shining Knight, the Crimson Avenger, the Star-Spangled Kid, and Stripesy, that's who!

Outside of the Green Arrow, none of these guys were exactly Class A box-office draws. But it mattered little. There was a war going on in the newsstands, and DC was bound to utilize whatever troops it could muster. Outside of the Crimson Avenger, who had been around since 1938, none of the heroes were old features when they were mustered into the ranks. That didn't matter much either. The green recruits had to be suited, trained, and shipped out there, because there were heroes dying at the front even at that moment, their books sagging over the wire of a spinner rack.

Leading Comics #1 (Winter 1941-42) was created to be the home of the newborn Seven Soldiers of Victory. They held on for about four years and fourteen issues, then gave their book to the likes of Peter Porkchops. But if you think a fourteen-issue run is to be belittled, consider Marvel's counterpart to the JSA, the All-Winners Squad, which ran for two issues and folded. And that was with the likes of Captain America, the Human Torch, and Sub-Mariner manning the barricades!

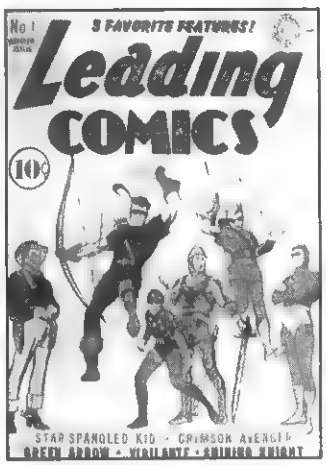
Outside of the Justice Society, the Marvel Family, and the Young Allies... Golden Age super-teams didn't fare that well. That may have been the reason that Quality never tried one, or why *Prize Comics*'s super-doers only met in a single Frankenstein tale.

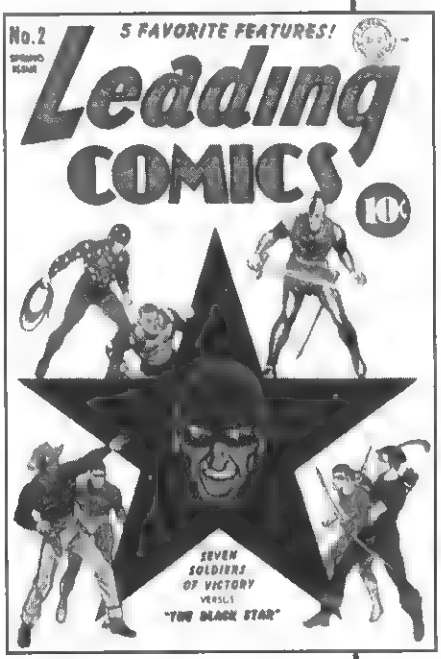
Nonetheless, in *Leading Comics* the Seven Soldiers made their stand. And y'know what? Their stories were pretty good.

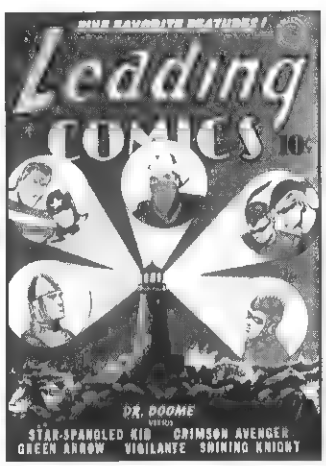
Leading #1's cover was headlined, "5 Favorite Features!" and showcased the Vigilante, Green Arrow and Speedy (seemingly dropping from nowhere into their fellows' midst), Star-Spangled Kid, Shining Knight, and the Crimson Avenger, all the Law's Legionnaires saved Stripesy. The splash page didn't give their team name, just their individual logos, and promised they were "All together in one whirlwind adventure!"

"From today on, the grim hosts of gangdom have a new and powerful combine of righteousness to contend with... You know all these heroes... Now follow them as they pool their vast powers to lash out with crushing force against dark demons of destruction in the hand of a mastermind of Machiavellian cunning and power!"

That "vast powers" tag is interesting, because none of the Seven







Soldiers had any super-powers, so to speak. The Shining Knight had a sword that could cut through just about anything, and Green Arrow and Speedy had some tricky arrows, but that's about as "super" as the spirited septet got.

Here's another wrinkle (this provided by friends and fellow researchers, Rich Morrissey and Martin O'Hearn): not only did the first three Seven Soldiers stories sport various artists for solo-hero chapters, but multiple writers as well. Mort Weisinger wrote the intro and outro of #1 and 2, plus the Vigilante chapter in issue #1. Bill Finger wrote the Vig chapter in issue #2. Jerry Siegel wrote the Star-Spangled Kid in #1. Other writers are hard to sleuth out. With issue #4, they called a halt to this practice and let one writer do the entire book, as in *All-Star*. Bill Finger may have written issue #4, and issues #6-14 were definitely scribed by Joe Samachson. A Samachson Seven Soldiers script intended for issue #15 was published in the 1970s as a back-feature in *Adventure Comics* #438-443. (More of that later.)

The Hand!

For now, let's just get back to 1941. On page one of their first story, Mort Weisinger commented, "But how came these gallant figures to join in mortal combat against the arch-criminal and his glittering galaxy of goons? Strangely enough, it was the arch-criminal himself who brought them together!"

Specifically, it was The Hand.

The Hand's hand symbolically dangled five super-villains like puppets on strings in the second-page splash. The over-villain made his first appearance proper in the next panel, in which he learned that he had less than a month to live, being the victim of an unspecified but really nasty disease. "Dying! Me—the Hand—the greatest criminal the world has ever known! What a pity!" he lamented, holding his hands up to the light of a circular window. "My greatest coups still ahead of me! Foolproof schemes, planned in every detail! Now they will never be carried out!"

Then, a moment of epiphany. The Hand picked up a newspaper and saw a headline reading "BIG CAESAR SENTENCED TO 20 YEARS." Inspiration: if he himself could not carry out his crime plans, he'd hire five top-name crooks to do it for him, before he went out in a blaze of glory. "I'll crowd Captain Kidd and Jesse James right out of the history books!" said The Hand, laughing his head off and looking not unlike The Joker.

Along with Big Caesar, The Hand arranged the jailbreaks of The Needle, Professor Merlin, and the Red Dragon, all of them foes of our hard-pressed heroes. One new villain was added: The Dummy, a pint-sized plunderer who looked like he should be riding on Edgar Bergen's knee. After this story, he'd go on to become the Vigilante's number-one nemesis... but Weisinger wrote that strip, too.

The Hand assembled his partners, told them that they were to work as "his five fingers", and, after giving them his blueprints for crime, issued a challenge to the seven or eight heroes who were the baddies' opposite numbers. A broadside directed the Green Arrow, the Shining Knight, the Vigilante, the Star-Spangled Kid, the Crimson Avenger, and their respective partners to assemble at Gotham City Auditorium the following Tuesday.

So, for the first time, the famed second-string heroes met, shook hands, and watched a filmstrip of The Hand challenging them to stop his minions' robberies. "I am about to become, for the first time in my life, an informer!" he admitted. After informing them where they could find the Red Dragon, Big Caesar, Prof. Merlin, the Dummy, and the Needle, The Hand declared, "There, gentlemen, is opposition enough for you!", and the movie ended.

Green Arrow, feeling that they were being set up for something bigger, moved that they all meet again in a week to consider the problem of The Hand himself. Apparently, nobody thought that it would take more than a week to round up their foes, and all agreed. The Shining Knight brandished his sword and said, "And I offer a slogan for each of us to carry in the perilous days ahead: *Woe to all workers of evil!*" Everybody agreed on that, too. Then they forgot about it. Probably for the best.

After this, we got down to business. The Green Arrow and Speedy stopped Professor Merlin from robbing a gold prospector in Death Valley, Arizona. The Star-Spangled Kid and Stripesy went to the Panama Canal to stop the Needle from making off with a prototype ray gun. The Crimson Avenger and Wing (unofficial Soldier number eight) defeated Big Caesar on Broadway. The Shining Knight took himself and his flying horse, Winged Victory, to the forest of Wamona Valley to stop the Red Dragon from enslaving an Indian tribe. The Vigilante went to Hollywood and stopped The Dummy from turning people into stone. (The aftereffects on people like Charles Bronson and Jack Webb were obvious years later.) At the end of all that, The Hand ranted,

"They've failed!! All of them–even with the blueprints I gave them! ...Even so, I can still have my revenge on these so-called 'invincible heroes'!"

No such luck. The heroes met again at the theater, saw another film in which The Hand challenged them to battle him at his own trap-laden house, and went to take him on. Just before they arrived, The Hand got a phone call from his doctor: "Good news! A famous surgeon has discovered a way of treating cases like yours! You can be cured!" The Hand hung up, looking about as enthused as Hitler on D-Day.

Inevitably, the heroes came, fought traps, and conquered. When they barged into the room in which The Hand could be found, their foe was shielded by a sheet of bulletproof glass and had a lightning projector ready to burn them to ashes. The Vigilante took out his trusty six-gun, shot the gimmick off its supporting cables, and saw it fall right on The Hand. The villain was apparently done for.

The Shining Knight rallied the heroes for a denouement. "Noble comrades, need this be our last adventure together? Let us band ourselves into a fighting unit whenever crime strikes the battlements! Are you with me?" There were shouts of "Count me ins!" and similar sentiments, and The Vigilante, at the end, said, "That makes it unanimous!" They hadn't really chosen a group name yet, but Weisinger's closing caption promised, "And so we leave these *Seven Soldiers of Victory* until Justice's clarion call again summons them to action in the next issue of LEADING COMICS!"

That was that.

It was a bit superior to the first Justice Society tale, which was nothing more than a bunch of heroes sitting around a dinner table and regaling each other with their recent exploits. The story played to the strengths of the individual heroes, had (for the time) a decent beginning and ending, and gave us a much-copied scene of a batch of solo do-gooders deciding to form a super-team. Until 1977, the Justice Society never even *had* an origin story.

One big problem remained, though. Outside of Green Arrow, none of the Seven Soldiers were front-line features. (Star-Spangled Kid had been created to carry *Star-Spangled Comics*, but he failed and gave the job to the Guardian & Newsboy Legion.) Since the very name "Seven Soldiers" prohibited more than seven members, the only way they could play mix-and-match the way the Justice Society did was to dump an old member. They didn't do that, so Robotman, Aquaman, Zatara, Johnny Quick, the Guardian, Tarantula, Liberty Belle, and the other contenders remained teamless until Roy Thomas, forty years hence, retroactively made them members of the All-Star Squadron. But Weisinger controlled enough heroes to have made the Law's Legionnaires a more varied group, if he had wanted to.

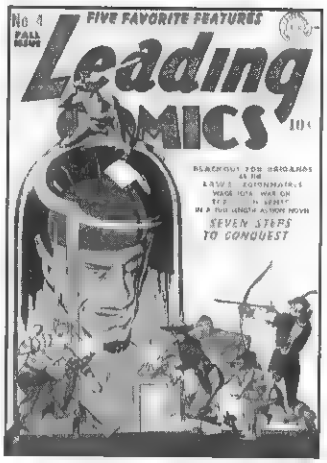
Still, there was some appeal in a stable lineup of heroes who really didn't have any powers and who had to take care of sizeable threats with gimmicks, guts, and brains... kind of a League of Batmen. So the Seven Soldiers of Victory made the most of their fourteen-issue stand.

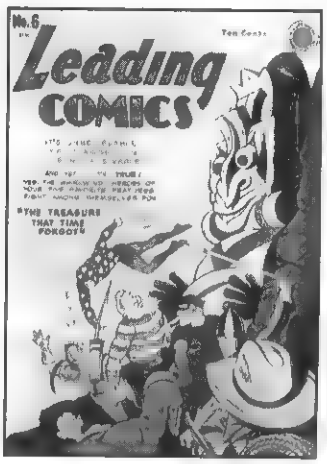
The Black Star and Tyrants of Time

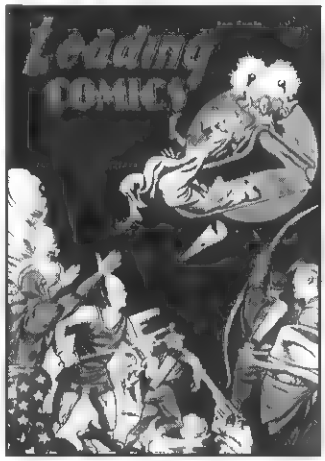
"Beware! The Black Star Shines!" was the title of the second SSOV story. It resembled the initial tale quite a bit: a criminal mastermind banded five of the Soldiers' individual enemies together to carry out singular crimes that fit into his master plan. The Black Star was the over-villain, The Rattler, Captain Bigg, the Hopper, Falseface, and the Brain were his minions, and the Star told his five hirelings where to go and what crimes to pull by means of a movie. Sound familiar? The Star-Spangled Kid and Stripesy happened onto the plot. They summoned the Soldiers, who split up to conquer the villains and came together again in the end to deal with the Black Star.

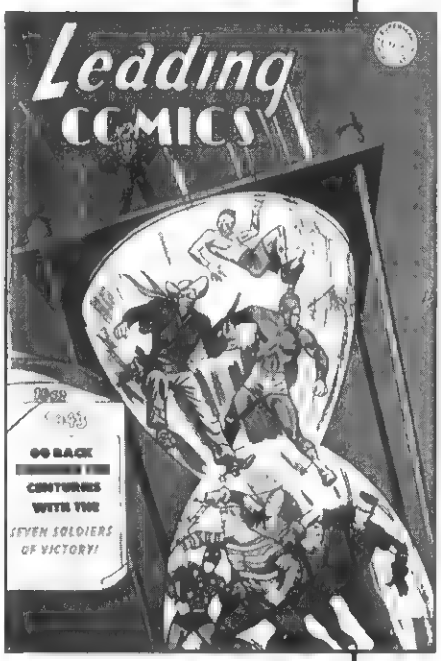
At least this time the villain had a different objective. In reality, the Star was a shortish individual called Mowse. He used five rare elements stolen by his lieutenants to power a growth-ray that turned him into a giant, and he beset the invading Law's Legionnaires with giant birds, ants, rabbits, spiders, and weeds. The heroes broke through, and Stripesy laid five knuckles on the Black Star's big chin, knocking him under the growth-ray again. This time the villain grew too big for his strength to support his body, and he died, destroying his ray in the process. This story has since been reprinted in *Justice League of America* #111-112, the only Seven Soldiers story from the Forties available in such form to modern-day fans.

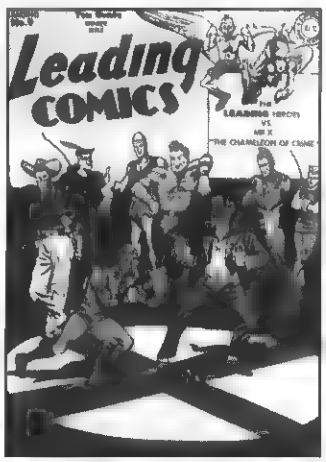
Leading #3 featured an even more interesting story in "The Tyrants of Time". The story opened with a shot of Alexander the Great astride his white horse, about to charge into battle, only to get yanked off with a big ZOOM! into infinity. "Our chieftain goes to take counsel with Jupiter!" guessed one of his captains. Other tough-guys from history were similarly











snatched away with swishes and whooshes: Nero, Attila the Hun, Genghis Khan, and Napoleon. They all materialized before a balding, evil genius who greeted them thusly: "Welcome to glory and power beyond your wildest dreams, gentlemen! You are now on Long Island in New York! This is 1942–and I am Dr. Doome!"

"You are a madman to interrupt my conquest of the world!" pouted Alexander. "My imperial guard will deal with you!" snapped Napoleon. But Dr. Doome settled them all down by pointing out his time machine (We might observe that, twenty years later, another Dr. Doom would make his first appearance in a story that utilized a time machine of his own creation. But that would be catty, wouldn't it?) which had brought them all to this conclave. "I hate the men of today! They laughed at me! Now I propose to force them to pay for another machine that will project us all into the future, where we will seize power and rule as kings!" This, of course, ignored the fact that, in their home eras, the five tyrants *already* ruled as kings. But, apparently, Doome was one heck of a salesman. He equipped each of his charges with a rod that would return them to their proper time-eras in case of failure. Then he assigned them to steal five rare metals he needed to power his future-ray, and turned them loose. "I was getting bored with Rome, anyway!" opined Nero.

This time it was Green Arrow and Speedy who copped to the strange happening, when they saw the five fruitcakes pulling a bank robbery in ancient battle gear and making a getaway in an airplane. Nero told Genghis, as small talk, that he once had a man flung to the lions for predicting that humans would someday fly like birds. But then again, he flung a lot of people to the lions for a lot less, so that wasn't surprising. The Emerald Archers overheard the conversation via radio, surmised that they were dealing with real conquerors from the past, not just Section Eights with Napoleon complexes, and called the Seven Soldiers of Victory together.

The Law's Legionnaires came together, learned of the threat ("Gadzooks, I come from the past, so why not they?" asked the Shining Knight), split up, and dealt with the bad guys. The Star-Spangled Kid and Stripesy Waterlooed Napoleon, Green Arrow and Speedy turned back Alexander, the Shining Knight clobbered Genghis Khan (ironic, in view of what would happen years later), the Vigilante rounded up Attila the Hun, and the Crimson Avenger and Wing stopped Nero's fiddling. There was more to it than that–the Green Arrow chapter, for example, featured some wacky robots, and the Vigilante enlisted the services of a codger from the Old West–but there's only so much space we have to work with. At the close of each chapter, the time-lost tyrants decided they had had it better in the past, and activated the rods to return them back home.

The Seven Soldiers got together again, ganged up on Dr. Doome, and chased him through his time machine right into the Trojan War. After a brief skirmish with Ulysses, the heroes convinced him that they were on the right side. Doome pulled a fadeout and returned to 1942–sure he had left the heroes stranded, but Speedy had palmed one of Doome's time rods, and the villain, to his consternation, saw the septet of heroes rematerialize in his time machine. Doome jumped into his future-time machine, saying that it would project him into the future, but, without the five metals to protect it, it blew up as a result. Nobody knew if Doome survived the blast, but, since he hasn't turned up in a Legion of Super-Heroes story, he probably didn't.

At the end, the Shining Knight, who had a feel for such things, raised his sword and declared, "Comrades in arms, I give you this pledge of the Round Table...while tyrants breathe, and men conspire against their fellows, and greed stalks unleashed...this good right arm shall never falter, nor this good sword be sheathed!" "We're with you!" chorused the others.

The Seven Soldiers stories have been unfairly bumrapped, as lukewarm copies of the Justice Society and usually by JSA fans who should know better. But this story, and the others which followed, were easily as entertaining as the contemporary *All-Star* opuses. And anybody who has read the JSA and SSOV stories from that time will probably have to admit one thing: sometimes, the Seven Soldiers were better.

The cover of *Leading* #4 proclaimed, "Blackout for brigands as the Law's Legionnaires wage total war on *The Sixth Sense* in a full-length action novel: *'Seven Steps To Conquest!'*" The title may have been keyed by the famed mystery play, *Seven Keys to Baldpate*, or by A. Merritt's fantasy novel *Seven Footsteps to Satan*. This time, some changes were in the wind. First, the entire story was written by a single writer, possibly Bill Finger. Second, the whole thing was drawn by a single artist, Ed Dobrotka, who stayed for the next issue as well. It's possible that Mort Weisinger found the task of coordinating a large team of artists and writers just too much of a hassle.

(After the war, the Justice Society would follow suit, when shrinking page counts made it prohibitive to feature characters in solo chapters.)

The Sixth Sense, appeared to be a man who lived in a glass tube and mentally controlled a huge robot, lacking in the normal five senses but using his sixth sense of telepathy to make up for it. He enlisted the aid of five crooks to steal five jewels for him, and increased one of their senses apiece with a hormone extract provided by one Dr. Brett. With enhanced hearing, sight, touch, taste, and smell abilities, the miscreants ran afoul of the Seven Soldiers after the Shining Knight tried and failed to stop their plan at the outset. The story has been retold in a condensed form by Roy Thomas in *All-Star Squadron* #56. The crooks stole the five jewels, then got electrocuted by their treacherous master.

Brett, who was the real Sixth Sense (it was only a dummy in the glass tube), used the five jewels to power a "lifestone" that could animate non-living objects, and gloated that he would conquer the world with an army of statues. It ended with Brett being turned into stone by the Lifestone's rays and the Vigilante dumping the Lifestone into a river, gone from the eyes of man forever...or until some scripter decides to pick up on it again.

The Skull

In #5, the Soldiers assembled to tackle The Skull in "The Miracles That Money Couldn't Buy!" One villain, five henchmen, the usual sort of thing. *Leading* #6 put our heroes on the trail of "The Treasure That Time Forgot" in the first Joe Samachson story. Arthur Cazeneuve or Maurice Del Bourgo drew the Soldiers in #6 and #8-14, with Pierce Rice rendering #7. At any rate, #6 turned out to be a better story than its predecessors. The Seven Soldiers were kept together through most of the story, getting to use their talents either as a team–or against each other. As it happened, an archaeologist had clues as to the whereabouts of a billion dollars worth of gold stolen from Athualpa by Pizarro. And back in 1943, a billion dollars was a billion dollars! "What Uncle Sam couldn't do with a billion dollars...battleships, tanks, planes...everything to smash the Axis! We've just got to tackle this thing!" declared the Soldiers.

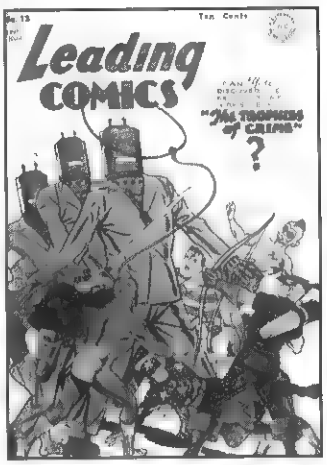
So they split into competitive teams to try and decode three mysterious couplets with clues to the treasure's hiding place. The Star-Spangled Kid and Stripesy squared off with the Green Arrow and Speedy. The Shining Knight took on the Vigilante. That left the Crimson Avenger and Wing on their own. But considering the other heroes got fairly peeved with each other, and even came to blows before shaking hands and getting on with the job, it was probably for the best. In the end, the heroes cleaned up on a gang of crooks who were trying to find the gold themselves, found the treasure and promised to give it to Uncle Sam, and strode off, telling the readers to buy more war bonds and stamps.

With its intra-team squabbling and warfare, *Leading* #6 almost anticipated Marvel of the Sixties. But that is stretching a point. Joe Samachson had simply shown how good a scripter he was. Instead of being bound to the team/split-up/team formula, he found ways of playing around with it.

WWII is coming to an end

In #7, the Soldiers encountered "The Wizard of Wisstark", a long riff on *The Wizard of Oz*. The heroes were lured onto an airship which took them to the lost Arctic city of Wisstark, whose "wizard", like Oz, was an American with no real mystic abilities at all. He had happened onto the strange city while exploring, and stayed to teach them some democracy. They liked it, but the rulers of a neighboring city called Stanovia didn't, and they appeared to be *real* wizards. Thus, the Wizard of Wisstark summoned the seven heroes to even the odds. The Law's Legionnaires fought their various foes, exposed the enemy wizards as being just as phony as the Wisstark variety, and liberated Stanovia.

Issue #8 was another time-travel story, notable in that The Dummy was cast as the over-villain. He trapped the Seven Soldiers in "collapsible roads" then zapped them with a stolen time-ray. Why he should have done this, rather than just letting his gang ventilate them with machine-gun bullets, has been lost to the ages. The Green Arrow and Speedy helped the Three Musketeers recover the Queen of France's necklace (the king had stolen it); the Crimson Avenger and Wing fought off Japanese invaders in ancient China; the Star-Spangled Kid and Stripesy met Leif Ericson and Eric the Red and discovered America; the Vigilante helped save Julius Caesar and Marc Antony from Roman crooks; and the Shining Knight aided Leonardo Da Vinci. (Most of this issue was drawn by Joe Kubert, according to Jerry Bails.) Leonardo repaid the Knight by sending him back to 1943 via a time-machine of his own invention. Once there, Sir Justin found the Dummy's stolen time-machine, used it to bring his comrades back from the



PREVIOUS PAGES AND ABOVE:
Leading Comics #1-14 (Winter 1941-Spring 1945) comprise the Golden Age run of The Seven Soldiers of Victory, a sort of "second-banana" Justice Society-like superhero team. The series has evaded the collector spotlight but is actually an entertaining "poor man's" All Star. In 1944, Leading adopted a lighter tone, an appropriate prelude to its conversion to a humor title.

past, and joined them to whomp the Dummy.

Leading #9's villain was one Mr. X, "The Chameleon of Crime", a baddie of 1,000 faces. One interesting point: the text story in this issue was actually a chapter of the Seven Soldiers story. "King of the Hundred Isles," in #10, was noteworthy in that the Soldiers were split up and paired with partners not their own: the Crimson Avenger with Speedy, the Green Arrow with the Vigilante, Stripesy with Wing, and the Shining Knight with the Star-Spangled Kid. #11 featured "The Hard-Luck Hat", with a gangster's lucky hat falling through various adventures until it finally became the nesting place for some baby birds.

The stories were still fairly good, but it was obvious the Seven Soldiers were running out of steam. They hadn't made as big an impact as the Justice Society, and none of the heroes had been boosted into solo titles from their exposure in *Leading*. By contrast, the Flash, Green Lantern, and Wonder Woman all had thriving titles. Throughout their run, the Seven Soldiers never lifted *Leading* beyond quarterly status. World War II was almost over, and the Seven Soldiers were about to become casualties.

The Law's Legionnaires tackled "The Million Dollar Challenge" in issue #12, going after five hidden valuables to earn a rich man's million dollars for charity. In #13, they took on the Barracuda, a master crook who wanted curios for his crime museum. And in #14, dated Spring, 1945, in a story called "The Bandits From the Books", they fought Old King Cole, Humpty Dumpty, Long John Silver, Falstaff, Uriah Heep, and other characters brought to life from books by a scientist's formula. At the end, Stripesy promised, "Call on us, pal, whether they're crooks from books or from real life, we'll take them on and set things right!"

No such luck. The Seven Soldiers were out of business as of that issue.

Beyond the Death of the Law's Legionnaires

The heroes themselves didn't do so badly in their solo careers. Since they were mostly creations of Mort Weisinger, and Weisinger controlled DC's Superman books, many of them continued their solo careers far beyond the death of the Law's Legionnaires. The Green Arrow and Speedy never really stopped operating, and eventually ended up in the Justice League and the Teen Titans, respectively. The Shining Knight continued through *Adventure* #166, dated June 1951. The Vigilante rode the range with his motor-scooter and his Oriental partner Stuff in *Action Comics* till November 1954. The Star-Spangled Kid made it through *Star-Spangled Comics* #83 (August 1948) before ceding his spot to his sister, Merry, Girl of 1,000 Gimmicks. Only The Crimson Avenger did badly, making his last *Detective Comics* appearance with issue #89 (July 1944). Significantly, he was not a Mort Weisinger character.

Leading Comics did well enough on its own. First, there was a format change to funny-animal fare in #15, with Peter Porkchops making his debut in #23. The kids apparently liked the funnies a lot better than the Seven Soldiers, as *Leading* soon became a bimonthly book. By #42, it was retitled *Real Screen Comics*, and introduced The Fox and the Crow, Flippity and Flop, and Tito and his Burro to comic-dom. With #129, it became *TV Screen Cartoons*. The final issue, #138, was dated January/February 1961.

With that kind of success, who needed super-heroes?

But in comics, there is a certain genius for self-cannibalization...

Revisiting the Golden Age

By the early Seventies, DC was revisiting its Golden Age with a vengeance, along with the Golden Ages of Fawcett, Quality, Street and Smith, and anything else it could get its hands on. Since the Justice Society had become one of fandom's biggest rages due to its annual crossovers with the Justice League, DC had been teasing readers with acknowledgments of that *other* hero group they had back in the Forties.

First, Mark Hanerfeld did a one-page Fact File rundown on the group that ran in some of DC's comics in 1969. Then Murphy Anderson drew an excellent portrait of the group for a *Justice League* giant, labelled "The Seven Soldiers of Victory, Plus One". The Plus One, of course, was Wing. Along with that, Denny O'Neil had revived The Vigilante in a Justice League story, and the modern cowboy crusader had been making sporadic appearances since then. A couple of Shining Knight tales by Frank Frazetta turned up in *Adventure*'s reprint section. Fan interest was growing.

At the same time, editor Julius Schwartz was looking for a way to spice up the JLA-JSA teamups in *Justice League*, which were going stale after ten years. Converging with that was the fact that the 1972 team-up would begin in *Justice League* #100, and the tenth team-up of the Justice League and Justice Society to boot. Also, Len Wein became the JLA scripter with that issue, and began one of the best

runs of scripts the League had seen hitherto. So...what if a *third* team of heroes was brought in to buttress the League and Society?

The classic *JLA* #100 cover (August 1972) showed eight League/Society members standing at the gravesite of the "Unknown Soldier of Victory." Above them, the ghostly figures of the Seven Soldiers loomed, with Sir Justin's blade seemingly thrust into the stone of the grave–a neat bit of Arthurian symbolism. A blurb boasted "33 Heroes 33" and promised that the Justice League and Justice Society would search for the lost Law's Legionnaires.

But why were they lost, and where had they gone to?

As the story developed, we learned that the Seven Soldiers had fought a monstrous menace called the Nebula-Man sometime in the past, presumably in the Fifties. They defeated the menace, though one gave his life to do so. The heroes were scattered through the past as a backwash of the energy used to defeat Nebula-Man. Time travel, for the Seven Soldiers, was nothing new.

But their first foe, The Hand, had not died. In fact, he had restyled himself The Iron Hand, and was now threatening Earth-Two with a colossal, nebulous hand that could close and crush the world at any moment. (He was also the creator of the Nebula-Man, just to keep thing consistent.) The amassed Justice heroes had to travel through seven past eras, recover the Seven Soldiers, and bring them back to 1972 to learn what weapon they used against Nebula-Man, so that they could use a duplicate against the giant hand. And, over the course of three issues, the heroes of the Silver and Golden Ages recovered the Crimson Avenger in Aztec-era Mexico, freed the Shining Knight from the mental dominance of Genghis Khan (whom he had fought years earlier, with the Soldiers), saved Green Arrow in Robin Hood's time, picked up Stripesy in ancient Egypt, rescued Vigilante from being burned at the stake by American Indians, snatched the Star Spangled Kid from caveman times, and freed Speedy from the spells of Circe. Green Arrow apparently met his Earth-One counterpart, but the meeting went unrecorded.

So who was the dead Soldier, if all seven had been recovered?

The Crimson Avenger had the answer. "The Unknown Soldier of Victory is my aide and companion–*Wing!*" The Iron Hand made a last grab at victory, but was felled by a karate-chopping Diana Prince. Then the heroes built a new ray-weapon to destroy the cosmic hand, and the Red Tornado apparently gave his android existence to do it. He turned up hale and hearty an issue or two later, though.

Seven new heroes were around for DC to play with. A year or so later, the unused final Seven Soldiers of Victory script was found and drawn up by modern artists, including Dick Dillin, Howard Chaykin, Mike Grell, and Ernie Chan. It ran in the back of *Adventure Comics* #438-443, and concerned a pointed-eared lad named Willie Wisher who could make whatever he wished for happen. As such, it truly pointed out the differences between comic stories of the Forties and those of the Seventies. For instance, it was probably the last time in which the Green Arrow and Speedy would have to meet talking quarter moons...

So the Seven Soldiers of Victory were established in the 1970's DC Universe. But somebody or other decreed that the modern Green Arrow and Speedy were not to meet their Golden Age counterparts, so make that five. The Vigilante was nixed, again because of a conflict with his Earth-One version. Now there were four. Nobody much wanted to do anything with Stripesy or the Crimson Avenger. We were down to two. The Star-Spangled Kid and the Shining Knight were folded into the new Justice Society series appearing in DC's revived *All-Star Comics*, and the Kid stuck to the wall. Later, he joined Infinity, Inc., and renamed himself Skyman. Later, he died.

Even before that, the Crimson Avenger died, piloting a boat full of explosives out of harm's way in a celebrated *DC Comics Presents* "Whatever Happened To..." feature. The surviving Soldiers were shown at a graveside memorial in an *Infinity, Inc.* story. Green Arrow died in the "Crisis on Infinite Earths", and the 1940's Speedy was not heard from again. Hero by hero, the Seven Soldiers of Victory were taken apart.

But that was only in the present day. In Roy Thomas's retro-Forties series, *All Star Squadron*, all the members of the SSOV were alive and kicking, doing their bit against Hitler in World War II. *Leading* #4 was retold for the moderns, and the Shining Knight became one of the Squadron's most frequent flyers, probably due to Roy's love for Olde English stuffe.

But the book ended and, at present, there's been little evidence of the Seven Soldiers in the modern-day DC Universe.

There was really only room for one DC hero-team in the 1940's, and that was the Justice Society of America. But as long as readers are concerned with comics history, the Seven Soldiers of Victory will not be forgotten. ■

No. 15
ALL BRAND-NEW FEATURES!
Leading COMICS
HA! IF I DON'T KNOW THERE'S NO SUCH ANIMAL TO CALL THAT A DRAGON.
CALL IT A MOUSE IF YOU LIKE— BUT I'M LEAVING.
KING OSCAR'S COURT
THEY WALK! THEY TALK! THEY'RE JUST LIKE HUMANS! BUT THEY'RE ALL ANIMALS — AND THEY'RE A RIOT!

ALL COVERS © 1997 DC

ABOVE: **Leading Comics #15 was the first humor issue and introduced the little-known Nero Fox. Leading continued as a successful humor title for eleven years, from Summer 1945-Aug/Sep 1955. Leading #23** (ALSO ABOVE) **introduced the amazingly successful DC character, Peter Porkchops. His series continued past the title change (Leading Screen Comics #42 on) right on through to the final issue, one year before the Silver Age began.**

THE MATT SCHIFFMAN REPORT

1946-1956 Esoterics Still No. 1

Anytime a market has a slow period, certain reactions are very predictable. The few slow months that some dealers reported over the fall and holiday season, brought many collections out of the woodwork, and along with the traditional "pre-Spring resurgence", those collections are revitalizing the marketplace. Three collections of note are: a remarkable high grade Silver Age Marvel collection purchased by Dan Greenhalgh, at Showcase New England (which has been quite a success for him in just one month's time); a large group of nice books turned up by Phil Bellmore (his customers apparently quite pleased); and the spectacular collection that Steve Sibra and Dave Melvin purchased in Seattle which contained many excellent books.

Golden Age

All but the very best graded Timely and DC books are finding a certain level of resistance, because a fair number of these approach the thousand dollar level, This level is finding a bit of resistance from some collectors and investors. So far, the exceptions outweigh the rule, but most dealers continue to report this trend. An exception is clearly the explosive interest in the "oddball titles" such as Science Comics, and key Centaurs. Strong interest for Schomburg "icon" covers continues unabated.

Sales: All Winners #8 FN $550; Batman #1 AppVG $7,500; Blue Beetle #5 FN $180; Complete Comics #2 VG $400; Daring #10 FN $240; Fight #1 VG/FN $700; Superman #1 AppFN+ $13,500; Human Torch #8 VG $450; Ibis #1 FN+ $550; Marvel Mystery #25 VG $240, #41 FN $320; More Fun #28 VG+ $450, #29 VG+ $450; Movie Comics #1 (1939) VF $2,200; Young Allies #1 FN $2,400.

Post Golden Age/Pre Silver Age (1946-1956)

The discoveries that are made everyday (and even the anticipated discoveries) are driving material from these two publishing era's. Best of all, there always seems to be something for every taste and budget and none (dealers and collectors) seems to be focusing on any specific narrow group of titles (a condition which "bogged down" the Golden Age market).

Baker\Kamen\Good Girl material continues to lead the way, with pre-code Horror and Science Fiction very strong and slowly catching up. Multiples of guide are clearly a "norm" for this generally scarce and often under-priced material.

Sales: Crown #1 VF/NM $200; Haunted Thrills #2 VF $125; Hit #58 VF/NM $110; Jungle #110 VF/NM $110; Kid Comics #10 VG $145; Phantom Lady #13 VF+ $1,650; Planet #54 FN $158; Popular Teen Agers #10 NM $185; Romantic Story #10 VF/NM $78; Seven Seas #5 GD $120; Silver Streak #23 FN+ $175; Superman #100 FN $500;

Silver Age(1956-69)

There continues to be some disagreement about the success of Silver Age right now, but the consensus shapes up like this... high grade books continue to easily find a home, as well as the low grade keys. Prices must be somewhat more flexible when it comes to mid grade\non-key Marvels, yet can still sell when discounted. Contrary to some reports, the Silver Age is not dead by any means, it just seems that collectors are adamant about the prices they are willing to pay.

Sales: Action #242 VF $680; Amazing Spider-Man #2 VF/NM $2,500; Daredevil #1 VF/NM $1,800; Fantastic Four #1 FR/GD $995, Fantastic Four #5 VG $450; Flash #123 GD/VG $170; Hulk #1 GD $450; Justice League #1 GD $175; Magnus #1 FN $125; Sgt. FURY #1 GD $70; Our Army At War #83 GD $240, #115 VF $75; Silver Surfer #1 NM $480; Strange Tales #45 VF/NM $250; Wonder Woman #105 VG $550.

Bronze Age (1970-79)

As more and more collectors are joining the ranks of the '70s collectors, competition is beginning *Continued on page 74*

GREG WHITE
17 W MONUMENT AVENUE
KISSIMMEE, FLORIDA 34741
(407) 870-0400

Happy New Year and welcome to central Florida. Holiday sales were at a reasonable level. Mail order has been strong. Convention sales have slowed dramatically. Few collectors of vintage comic books are attending the shows here. Without their dollars it is getting more difficult to justify the cost and effort involved with setting up at these cons. It seems to me that most attendees are "flea market" people looking for a bargains... or action figure collectors who usually can be found in the toy department of Wal-Mart at 2 am. If this trend continues I feel the future of the comic book convention is bleak. When you can find the same product (blow out comics, action figures, cards) at your local flea mart why should you pay to attend a comic con? We have been selling our silver age and golden age comics at conventions for 26 years. Without the support of collectors who purchase pre 1965 books it makes little sense to continue. 1997 will help us determine our future plans.

Silver Age Comics 1955-1969

The song remains the same. The books that sell steady are keys or near mint issues. None of us have enough of those books. That leaves a vast stock of well known titles that fall into the good - very fine range. Sales on these books are hit and miss. One week we will sell a couple at guide and the next week one sells through mail order at 25% off. With the exception of perhaps a dozen books nothing from this period is rare. Show up at any large convention and you will *Continued on page 74*

MARKETPLACE MAIL

Continued from page 77

Mad Mona writes...

Comic Book Marketplace has to be my one monthly 'look forward to each issue' magazine. I always enjoy the interviews, color photos and comic book covers. It's the best $5 value for a great magazine on Golden and Silver Age comic books. It has become a monthly 'looking forward to' treat and provides enjoyment and nostalgia trips back to the forties and the days of those great 68 pages of color comics for a dime.

Mad Mona, Texas

Brilliant Spider-Man Article!

My personal thanks to Will Murray for his research and effort on a brilliant Spider-Man article. Congratulations, Will, for this fantastic contribution to the legend and legacy of the amazing Spider-Man. After reading the article several times, my theory is that Amazing Adult Fantasy was changed to Amazing Fantasy with the well-thought intent of a continuing series which featured Spider-Man (the same way that Detective Comics featured Batman).

Since Martin Goodman was convinced that readers would be turned off by a comic book entitled "Spider-Man", he accommodated Lee and Ditko by allowing their character to appear as the main feature in the "new Amazing" along with the suspense backup features.

Had Spider-Man not been received positively by readers, Marvel could have returned to the fantasy stories with no problem, or simply canceled the title since the sales were lagging anyway. The positive sales figures for Amazing Fantasy #15 demonstrated the great selling power of Spider-Man, however, and it was probably then decided to cancel the Amazing Fantasy series in favor of a self-titled Spider-Man comic book to insure big sales figures. The rest, of course, is comic book history. Sincerely,

John Mlachnik, Minnesota

Berk defends decision

In CBM #44 a reader questions my decision to leave off Flame #1 and Green Mask #1 from the Lou Fine list. I stick with that decision. Firstly, the chronology does not work as pointed out in my article. I do not profess to be the best at recognition of artistic style...but, in my opinion, there is no way Flame #1 looks like Lou Fine art. Yes, the Flame pose is obviously taken from Wonderworld #7, but the art contains none of the fine brush strokes that typify his work. That cover was done by the same artist who did the covers to Wonderworld #16-20. The Flame art for Wonderworld #7 is distinct from Flame #1. Also, in my opinion, the Green Mask art just is not Fine. It is just too crude. Oh, by the way, Murphy Anderson agrees....

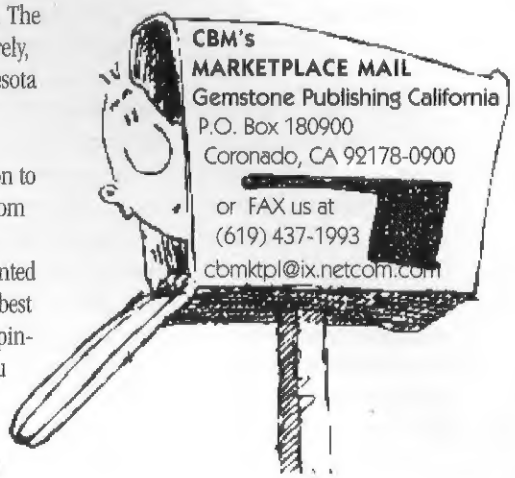
Jon Berk, Connecticut

Scarce 3-paks

After my article "Rare as Ducks Teeth!" appeared in issue #43 I received a couple of calls from collectors insisting that they got their scarce "3-paks" from a Wal-Mart outlet. Could I have goofed here? After mulling this over for a few weeks, I dove into my archives and uncovered the following. Indeed, there was a Donald & Scrooge available from Walmart, BUT it was packaged together with a Gladstone album entitled "Walt Disney Comics and Stories First Appearances" These were reprints of first appearances of Uncle Scrooge, Gladstone Gander, and Huey, Dewey, Louie as the Junior Woodchucks. Each album came with a different comic, one from the set of three comics that were issued! Also, the album came with a "collectible" serially numbered card. One side of the card had a color reproduction of Scrooge's enemies that originally appeared in Overstreet Price Guide #7 and the reverse side had a picture of Barks. Another interesting sidelight is that both the Gladstone imprint and the Disney Comics logo appeared on the cover. Hope this clears up any misunderstandings. Thanks,

Michael Naiman, California

I welcome comments and suggestions from CBM readers all over the world. Please note that CBM reserves the right to edit letters selected for publication for length and/or content. If you'd care to write, send communications to:



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Comic-Quizz ??

by Rob Satonica

TAKE THE CBM COMIC KNOWLEDGE CHALLENGE!

Welcome to *CBM*'s Comic Quizz, a column devoted to tidbits and trivia from all ages of comic book history. Each month we will present interesting and challenging facts, figures and comic folklore that will challenge your knowledge and tickle your memory banks! Subjects will include stuff you know... stuff you don't know... and stuff that will surprise you!

Q: Quality Comics produced some enduring heroes during the Golden Age. These characters would later be purchased by DC comics and incorporated into their superhero universe (and in some cases, killed off). Who was the first superhero published by Quality, written by Will Eisner and drawn by Lou Fine?

A: *Doll Man in Feature Comics #27.*

Q: Jim Shooter's career in comics has spanned four decades and several companies, including Marvel where he became editor in chief, and Valiant which he founded. He wrote his first story at age 13. Which comic featured Jim's first published story?

A: *Adventure Comics #346.*

Q: Charles Moulton is a pseudonym used as the writer of many early Wonder Woman stories. This name was the combination of the middle names of 2 people. Who were they?

A: *Maxwell Charles Gaines and William Moulton Marston.*

Q: William Marston is also famous for inventing something unrelated to comics. This invention would show up in Wonder Woman #53, right on the front cover! What was this invention?

A: *The Lie Detector.*

Q: The first woman to don a costume was the Woman in Red in Thrilling Comics in 1940. But it was Tarpe Mills who created the first major female costumed hero. Who was she?

A: *Miss Fury.*

Q: On the subject of Tarpe Mills... she drew several other strips prior to Miss Fury, including Purple Zombie and Barry Finn, primarily masculine characters. Tarpe is not her real name, but a stage name she chose to avoid letting down the readers who might be disappointed that a woman was writing these masculine hero stories. What was Tarpe Mills real first name?

A: *June.*

Q: Matt Baker's stunning work on Phantom Lady would make him the artist most identified with the character. Even so, he was not the artist who originally drew her. That artist would draw most of her adventures in Police Comics before she won her own title. Who was this original Phantom Lady artist?

A: *Arthur Peddy.*

Q: While Bang Up Comics only lasted three issues, it did contain the character Lady Fairplay, who was drawn by an assistant to Chester Gould (creator of Dick Tracy). Who was this artist?

A: *Jack Ryan.*

Q: Gillmor Publications, which derived its name from a mingling of the names of publisher Stanley Morse and managing editor Raymond Gill, produced 42 horror comics in the early 1950s before the comics code did them in. What were the Gillmor horror titles?

A: *Mister Mystery #1-19, Weird Chills #1-3, Weird Mysteries #1-12, and Weird Tales Of The Future #1-8.*

Q: This comic, while famous for introducing a popular character, is notable for two other reasons. It is the first cover art by Bernie Wrightson for DC comics, and Louise Simonson (then Louise Jones) posed for photos that were then used as a reference for the woman on the cover and in the story the only time she had done so. What book was this?

A: *House Of Secrets #92*

Q: This comic title ran for only four years, and spawned the Owl by Frank Thomas, its most popular character. It also had the first Andy Panda stories and a Tarzan text feature by Burroughs... with many issues containing art by Al McWilliams. Name this title.

A: *Crackajack Funnies.*

Q: In the early days of comics, those who spun the wonderful tales that would fire the imagination of millions of readers were largely unknown. The first comic to feature their creators did so with a simple one-page biography, and even included photos. Name this famous hallmark issue.

A: *Superman #1, a 1 page bio with photo of Siegel and Shuster.*

Q: After the code had taken hold, EC comics began publishing more censor-friendly fare. One of these books was originally printed by Charlton Press, but when Gaines saw how poorly they had been printed, he ordered the entire print run destroyed and had them done over. Only 1 copy from the original printing was kept by Gaines, and was discovered when the Gaines file copies of his books became available.

A: *Impact #1.*